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*John M. Krebs.*  
LECTURES

ON

**SCRIPTURE**

**FACTS AND PROPHECY.**

BY

**WILLIAM BENGOLLYER, D.D.**

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—————Monumentum ære perennius,  
Regalique situ Pyramidum altius:  
Quod non imber edax, non Aquilo impotens  
Possit diruere, aut innumerabilis  
Annorum series, et fuga temporum.

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HOR.

TWO VOLUMES IN ONE.

**VOL. I.**

THE FIRST AMERICAN, FROM THE SECOND LONDON EDITION.

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PHILADELPHIA:  
PUBLISHED BY GRIGG & ELLIOT.  
*No. 9, North Fourth Street.*

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1835.

GRIGGS & CO., PRINTERS.



TO THE  
RIGHT HONOURABLE  
THOMAS LORD ERSKINE,

&c. &c. &c.

MY LORD,

IF flattery be essential to a Dedication, I shall never write one: but, in the present instance, I have the satisfaction of believing that an attempt at adulation would be as disgusting to your Lordship, as I feel it would be unworthy the dignity of the subject of this volume, and degrading to me as a minister of the sanctuary. It would be easy to tell your Lordship that I admire your talents, and that the world admires them too: this would not be adulation: but it would be a tribute unconnected with the cause of Christianity, and I shall therefore wave it altogether. Permit me, then, to remind your Lordship, that you descend from an ancient and noble House, which piety has distinguished as well as rank; and that, in various branches of your family, religion has shed a lustre more dazzling and more glorious than the radiance of nobility. Providence has placed your Lordship high in the sphere of society; and it is in your power to do much to serve the cause of revealed truth. With the confidence inspired by your public and admirable defence of Christianity; and with the affection kindled by the distinguished honour I have enjoyed in the friendship of an illustrious Relative; I presented, in an early stage of this work, an

outline of it to your Lordship, and received from you a note, authorizing me to assume the sanction of your name in the eyes of the public, and expressing, in your own energetic language, your persuasion of the infinite value of "Revelation, without whose hopes and consolations, all human distinctions are nothing." Under these auspices the work was carried on, and is now brought to a conclusion: and I have the honour to present to your candour, with my most grateful acknowledgments, the offspring of your own indulgent patronage. It is my sincere and earnest desire, that the power of that Religion, the evidences of which your judgment approves, may be the consolation of your heart; that its influence may shed a divine light upon the elevated orbit in which you move; and that its unfading honours may be your future recompense, when the distinctions of rank shall indeed be lost, and when the only nobility allowed will consist in an alliance with HIM, who, in the days of his pilgrimage upon the earth, had "not where to lay his head."

I have the honour to remain,

with high consideration,

MY LORD,

Your Lordship's much obliged

and most obedient servant,

WILLIAM BENGO COLLYER.

BLACKHEATH-HILL, KENT.  
Oct. 21, 1809.



## PREFACE.

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It is a pleasing duty now devolving upon me, in sending forth into the World this Second Edition of **LECTURES ON SCRIPTURE FACTS**, to express the gratitude which I owe to the Public, for that favourable, and even flattering reception, which has distinguished my feeble, but well-intended efforts. Perhaps the best and most expeditious mode of explaining the design of this work, will be to transcribe some observations prefixed to the First Edition: to which I shall take the liberty to subjoin some remarks relative to the criticisms which have passed upon it, and the alterations which I have felt it necessary to make in the present impression of these Lectures.

“The history of the publication is simply as follows.—It was suggested to me, about seven years since, in a cursory conversation, that it would be a desirable thing to produce a confirmation of the facts recorded in the sacred writings, from contemporary historians, so far as these could be obtained: and where the remoteness of scriptural narrations stretched beyond the chronology of heathen compositions, to adduce such fragments of antiquity as time has spared to us, so far as they bear any relation to events transpiring at the earliest periods. It was justly observed, that while many and successful efforts have been made, and are daily making, to elucidate and defend the doctrines and the precepts of Christianity, the facts recorded in the Bible have not been placed in the same advantageous point of view. Some have, perhaps, been deterred by the toil necessary to collect such testimonies, to select from the mass evidences which are more prominent than others, and to discriminate such portions of heathen records as mingle truth with fable,—to detect and expose the one, and to produce and enforce the other. It is also probable that not a few have declined to adventure upon this plan, because it is so unlike the usual and popular modes of pulpit discussion.

Thus, while the citadel of revealed religion has been ably and zealously defended, the out-works have been abandoned, or at least over-looked; and the posts where some veterans of old times fought, have, since their removal by death, remained unfilled. Upon revolving this conversation in my mind, I felt that the remark was important, and I began seriously to think of undertaking the proposed discussion, just so far as it might be useful to my own congregation, and would not interfere with the other arrangements of my ministerial labours. My first object was to discover by whom the ground had been trodden before me. I well recollected that Grotius had expressly set apart a portion of his *Treatise on the Truth of the Christian Religion*, to the consideration of Foreign Testimonies: and in that useful little volume will be found many of the authorities produced in the following pages. But Grotius has written in Latin, and is not, therefore, accessible to an English reader. He has been translated; but the plan proposed forms a very small part of his production; and the whole work can only be considered as an epitome of the *Evidences of Christianity*, where the principal arguments in its favour are enumerated and stated, but never dilated, and seldom more than barely named. Various have been the productions which tend to this point, under the sanction of such illustrious names as Shuckford, Prideaux, Lardner, Bryant, Stillingfleet, Pearson, Gale, Doddridge, and others. But these all enter only into a part of my scheme; they elucidate a particular portion of the sacred writings, or advert, in general terms, to the stability of the whole. Above all, it appeared to me that there was yet wanting a work, which might interweave foreign testimonies to the truth of Scripture history, with the discussion of the history itself; which might admit general and important remarks with a selected subject; and which might relieve the barrenness and languor of mere discussion, and of a series of extracts from heathen writers, by assuming the shape and the ardour of pulpit and popular addresses. Such was the design of the *Lectures* now submitted to the public, and it would ill become me to conjecture how far I have succeeded in filling up the outline. The plan was sketched for the use of my own congregation; and delivered in my own pulpit. It was afterwards desired by some, who perhaps thought too favourably of the execution, that it should be brought into a larger circle; and the *Lectures* were accordingly delivered during two winters in London. By the importunity of the same persons, the work is now committed to the press; and time must decide (while I anxiously wait its decision) whether I have done well or ill in yielding my private opinion of the demerits of the execution, to their flattering prepossessions in favour of its utility.

“Respecting the work itself, I have little to add to the remarks which will be found to introduce the first Lecture. Using freely different writers, I have also constantly acknowledged my obligations to them. I have carefully read over, and have endeavoured, faithfully to translate the passages produced from antiquity; and, separating them from the body of the work, I have preserved their original form for the use of the scholar who may choose to hear them speak their own language, and yet might be unwilling to take the trouble to hunt them down through various works, in notes at the end of each Lecture. I have subjoined a list of the names of the principal writers quoted in this work, and have placed over against their names the periods in which they flourished.

“I expect to derive much advantage from our public organs of criticism; and to candid criticism, criticism such as it ought always to be, willing to allow a merit as well as a defect, to point out a beauty as well as a fault, I shall always bow with respect, and shall always be happy to avail myself of its corrections and of its advice. If I could write a faultless volume, I must possess more than human powers: if I have produced one which shall be useful to the cause of truth and religion (and such was my design,) I shall rejoice in my general success; and, I hope, be willing to listen with gratitude to the candour which discovers to me where I have failed.”

I had flattered myself that the preceding observations would have so far explained my plan, as to have preserved me, at least on the part of candour, from misrepresentation. I wished it to be understood, that I was particularly anxious to occupy the attention of *young persons*; of all others the most likely to be ensnared by the popular objections of Skepticism; and that, so far from attempting to supersede the writings of those venerable names to which I have already referred, I was desirous of exciting attention to their invaluable labours, by placing in a prominent point of view, some of their arguments. I will not, however, allow, that this volume is a mere *compilation*: the form is altogether new—the evidences brought forward, select—and for the remarks designed either as illustrations or improvements, I am not indebted to any of my predecessors in these labours. While some have conceived the Notes ought to have been extended, others have maintained that they should have been retrenched, and might have been omitted altogether: the one party has considered me superficial; the other, has represented me, pedantic. Amidst such contrariety of opinion, it only remained for me to act according to the best of my judgment. It would be easy to extend the Notes—but my object was to interest, if possible, the attention of the Public, and not to over-



whelm it with that mass of heavy literature which encumbers earlier productions—and which might be more easily gathered as it presents itself, than selected, as it appears in this volume. At the same time, I deemed some Notes necessary, that the testimonies produced might not be placed upon my unsupported authority, nor trusted to general references, which would probably never have been followed up to the writers to which they appealed. One critic has said that I cannot have read all the writers whom I have quoted: it required no great degree of penetration to make this sagacious discovery—inasmuch as many of the names produced, rest upon the authority of Josephus, and other ancient writers, from whom their testimonies are extracted, the original works having long since perished. I will venture, however, to reassert, that I have carefully read the testimonies which I have produced—and if, in any particular instance, I have taken a quotation from a secondary author, not having the original at hand, I have referred to that author upon whose authority I produced it. At an early stage of these Lectures I was deterred from trusting second-hand references, by a circumstance, the relation of which may be useful to those who are disposed to confide in them. I had frequently seen Plato's imaginary description of the character and sufferings of a just man, produced as presenting a singular coincidence with the actual sufferings of Jesus Christ—and felt disposed to appeal to this circumstance, in the course of the present volume. An examination of the passage proved, that it is so far from being the sentiment of the philosopher, that he is merely giving the popular opinion upon the subject, as a statement of one *objection* to virtue, from the afflictions which *it is said* to involve. It is to be found near the beginning of the second book *de Republicâ* and is introduced by εἰς αὐτὴν. I have been accused of vanity in the parade of names prefixed to this volume, as writers quoted or referred to, in the course of the work. My object was to bring these names together merely that their respective chronology, which I was at some considerable pains to determine, might be seen by the reader at once, and without trouble: for the same reason I have retained it, in the present edition, in defiance of critical anathemas. Had those critics, who have carped at these little things, given themselves the trouble to read a volume, upon which they professed to sit in judgment, they would have discovered some errors of greater magnitude, and in so doing would have rendered me an important service—these, so far as I have detected them, I have endeavoured to correct. I am indebted to the *European Magazine*, for some judicious remarks on the aid of eastern literature to biblical criticism; and in confirmation of Scripture Facts.

The reason why I have not availed myself of this species of evidence is, that it will be more essential to me in the prosecution of a future part of my plan, than it is in the present volume. I am indebted to the *Literary Panorama*, for some useful general remarks, of which I hope in future to avail myself; and for a correct statement of the object of the Lectures, which so many periodical publications, either did not, or would not, understand. I am indebted to the *British Critic*, for some remarks on the style of the Lectures: which had also occurred to me before, and which I feel now with considerable force, as a motive for future diligence. Above all, I am indebted to the *Monthly Review*, for some judicious criticisms, upon which I have endeavoured to correct the present edition so far as it was in my power; and I have only to regret that their candid remarks did not appear, till it had far advanced towards publication. Upon the whole, I can say with truth, that I shall ever cherish as great respect for sound and liberal criticism, as I must feel high scorn of the insolence and ignorance which sometimes assumes its name. With respect to this volume, I am conscious of many imperfections. I have, nevertheless, accomplished my object as well as I could; and, with regard to that Holy Record, which I have endeavoured to serve, and to illustrate, I feel assured that it is, what it is represented in the title-page of this work,

—Monumentum ære perennius,  
Regalique situ Pyramidum altius:  
Quod non imber edax, non Aquilo impotens  
Possit diruere, aut innumerabilis  
Annorum series, et fuga temporum.

W. B. C.

BRACKHEATH-HILL, KENT.

Oct. 21, 1809.

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# LECTURES

ON

## SCRIPTURE FACTS.

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### LECTURE I.

#### INTRODUCTORY—THE NECESSITY OF A DIVINE REVELATION.

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JOB XI. 7—9.

Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is high as heaven, what canst thou do? deeper than hell, what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea!

To enlarge the sphere of knowledge, and to increase the sum of happiness in the present world, is an object worthy the attention of every friend of human nature; and the effort, even should it fail, deserves the approbation and the applause of wise and good men; but to provide consolation against the severest moments of trial, to disperse the cloud which hangs over “the valley of the shadow of death,” and to conduct the immortal spirit safe to the throne of the invisible God, is a purpose far more sublime, and an exertion of still greater utility. To shed lustre over a few years, or to live in remembrance a century or two, and then to be forgotten, is comparatively of small importance: yet for this the scholar labours, and the hero endures hardship—this is the summit of human ambition, and the boundary of its most sanguine expectations. To shine on the roll of science, to pluck honours which fade like the flower of the field while you gather them, or to sparkle among the favourites of fortune, is of little avail to man who must soon resign to the merciless grasp of death even the sceptre of the world, were it committed to his possession. Yet these things are sought amid repeated disappointments; and the golden bait is received with in-



creased avidity, although barbed with anguish and sorrow. But who regards the silent finger of religion pointing to an inheritance above the stars, promising splendours which shall never expire and, waiting to crown the man, who obeys her gracious admonitions, with honour, glory, and immortality?

When I remember the occasion on which I stand before this large assembly, and the awful engagement which at the solicitation of many among you, I have undertaken—I shrink from my subject, and enter upon the discussion of it with “fear and trembling.” To throw down the gauntlet, and to enter the list against winning and attractive fashion, is a bold and daring effort. It will be admitted that this is a day of prevailing infidelity; and surely it will also be allowed, that it is the duty of every man, who sustains the sacred office of a Christian minister, to “contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints,” and to “give a reason for the hope that is in him.” On this principle the lecturer presumes to offer his mite to the Lord of the Treasury towards the support of this great and common cause. It may be asked, why hoary age should not rather enter upon this arduous work? Would to God that more efforts were made on the part of able and faithful ministers, equally venerable for years and for literature, against the common enemy! Those, however, who imagine that age should exclusively wield the “two-edged sword” against scepticism, will do well to remember, that the opposite cause is not supported altogether, or for the most part, by years, experience, and learning. No, these are far from being exclusively our opponents. The young, the inexperienced, and the illiterate, have united with the sage and the philosopher, against the claims and the obligations of revelation. While even school-boys daringly renounce a system which they have not examined, which they cannot, alas! appreciate, and embrace one which they do not understand, may it not be permitted to a young man to say something in favour of a volume, which, if he should not succeed in defending it, he can truly say he admires and loves? Let the wise and the learned rouse to action, and produce their “strong reasons.”—I shall be among the first to sit at their feet: but upon persons of my own age, I feel that I have a peculiar claim; I trust that they will hear me with candour and respect; and for them principally I have suffered this engagement to be announced to the public. Let youth be opposed to youth, age to age, talent to talent. Let the enemies of revelation know, that we can ascend to their eminence, or sink to their level. Let it be seen, that some are growing up to support the Redeemer’s kingdom, while others finish their course, and are gathered to their fathers.

It may be said, that so many have undertaken this cause, and acquitted themselves so ably, that neither any thing new can be advanced, nor is it indeed necessary. It is readily granted, that I am to tread in a beaten track; but while scepticism continues to press upon us old objections in new forms, we must follow their example in refuting those objections: and it is as necessary as it ever was to oppose the standard of truth to that of error, so long as our adversaries determine to keep the field, and to maintain the combat. So far from flattering myself that I am striking out a new path, I shall professedly set before you, from time to time, such arguments and testimonies as I am able to collect from others; and shall freely use every author that may be serviceable to the cause which I attempt to defend. And if I shall be able to set an old argument in a new light, or even to bring one to remembrance only, I shall be satisfied to be regarded a compiler of evidences, rather than a creator of them; I shall be amply rewarded for my labour, nor will you regret your attendance. When, however, I recollect, that we all gather our stores of knowledge from the writings or conversation of others; that the experience and observation of the wisest of men could furnish him with comparatively little intelligence, were it never permitted to advance beyond its own immediate sphere; and when, in addition to these considerations, I remember that every man has his own train of thinking, and a mode of expression peculiar to himself, I flatter myself that all which shall be said, will not be borrowed, if all is not exclusively my own; and that something may be advanced in the course of these lectures, which, if it should not surprise by its novelty, may be candidly received for its justness, and attract by its simplicity and sincerity.

It will be proper, in a few words, to state the immediate purpose of these lectures, and the object of the plan which I am about to suggest: it is simply to meet scepticism on its own ground in relation to first principles. Is it asserted that the facts recorded in this volume have no evidence? We shall endeavour to prove that they are furnished with all the evidence which events so remote can have, and which Reason ought to require of Time. Is it said that Christianity is a modern invention? On the contrary, if our purpose be established, it will appear as old as the creation. Is the authority of the scriptures questioned? We will produce other testimonies. Is its history condemned as absurd? We shall attempt to show that it is perfectly rational; and that all evidences weighed, and all circumstances considered, it is clear that events could not have taken place otherwise than as they are recorded. Is it objected, that it claims support from miracles? It will follow

from our representations, if they are made with the strength and clearness which we desire, that such a book, so written, and so supported, could it be proved to be false, would be of itself a greater miracle than any which appears upon its pages. The facts which it records, are the immediate subjects of examination in the present course of lectures; and these will be considered in connexion with their history, and confirmed by foreign and ancient testimony, under the following arrangement:—

1. The present Lecture, which is merely introductory, will be an attempt to prove the necessity of a divine Revelation:
2. The Creation: that the Mosaic account of it is the only rational one which we have received:
3. The Deluge:
4. The destruction of Babel, the confusion of language, the dispersion of the people, and the origin of nations:
5. The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrha:
6. The history of Joseph; which will bring us to the close of Genesis:
7. Intermediate Lecture: a scriptural representation of the nature and destination of man:
8. The slavery and deliverance of Israel in Egypt:
9. The journey of the Israelites in the wilderness; their establishment in Canaan; and the circumstances attending these events:
10. The government of the Jews: including the theocracy and monarchy, to the building of Solomon's Temple; with a confirmation of some subordinate facts recorded in the scriptures:
11. The captivities of Israel and Judah:
12. The life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ, proved as matters of fact:
13. The character of the writers of the Old and New Testament:
14. Concluding Lecture—the unsearchable God; or, an attempt to prove an analogy between the religion of nature and that of the Bible, by showing that the same obscurity which overshadows revelation, equally overspreads nature and providence.

The present subject of discussion is,

#### THE NECESSITY OF A DIVINE REVELATION.

A fair trial of the powers of human reason was made during that long and dreary period in which the scriptures were confined within the walls of Jerusalem, and the world at large was left in the un-



molested exercise of all the means furnished by nature and philosophy, to conduct the mind to God. To that period we shall, therefore, recur; and shall endeavour to ascertain what were the discoveries made by the most enlightened among the heathens, respecting the nature of Deity, the relation which he bears to us, the obligations under which we are laid to him, the consequences of death, the secrets of futurity, and all those things which are so interesting to man, as an immortal being. It is fair to judge of the powers of nature and of reason, from the effects produced by their agency, when they were left altogether to themselves. It is unfair in the advocates of scepticism to avail themselves of the superior intelligence afforded by revelation, and to use this knowledge against the volume from which they derived it. It is not possible to determine with any degree of precision, what discoveries the unassisted light of reason is capable of making, while it is aided, and indeed absorbed, by the superior illumination of revealed religion; it must therefore be admitted, that a fair and accurate investigation of its powers, can only be made by looking at it as it really appeared when it was seen alone. We ask with confidence, whether at that period of the world, when science unveiled all her splendours, and irradiated the discovered globe from pole to pole; when Philosophy sat upon her throne enjoying the zenith of her power; and when Reason had attained the meridian of her glory; a system more honourable to God, more adapted to the wants and the felicity of man, and more productive of moral excellence, than that which is suggested in the scriptures, was produced? We defy scepticism to answer in the affirmative. Did the mild philosophy of Socrates and of Plato; did the elegant mind of Cicero; did all the heathen philosophers in their combined exertions, ever produce such affecting elucidations of divine goodness, such consoling demonstrations of divine mercy, such delightful discoveries of life and immortality? They never did. And we shall attempt to prove to you the necessity of a divine revelation from the state of the world, at that very period when these eminent persons flourished. We shall not cause to pass before you, rude and barbarous nations; but we shall bring to the test, scientific Greece, learned and polite Athens, polished, proud, imperial Rome. We solicit your attention to—

- I. THEIR SUPERSTITIONS AND RITES OF WORSHIP:
- II. THEIR CIVIL INSTITUTIONS AND THEIR DEFECTIVE MORALS:
- III. THEIR UNCERTAIN CONJECTURES IN RELATION TO FUTURITY.

I. THEIR SUPERSTITIONS AND RITES OF WORSHIP. And in contemplating the state of religion during the boasted reign of Reason and Philosophy, we cannot but be struck with their ignorance of—

1. THE NATURE AND THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD. When man was left to wander over this wide globe without one cheering ray to guide his feet, the light of nature excepted, the progression of erroneous conclusions founded upon one false principle was rapid and extensive. He beheld this fair world covered with every thing necessary to his existence, and to his enjoyments. Spring enchanted all his senses: a summer's sun poured his glories around him: autumn furnished his table; and experience taught him to secure her bounty in his rude habitation, while the blasts of winter howled round his dwelling, and spread desolation over the plains. He perceived that these seasons regularly returned, and that they departed in their order. He concluded that they had their appointed periods; and this suggested to him the conviction of a supreme overruling Intelligence. In every nation, and in every age, the conception of the being of a God, presented itself to the human mind; and an atheist was a monster even in the days of heathenism. He had no clear conception, however, of spirit distinct from matter; and therefore conjectured that this God might be visible. **HERE COMMENCED HIS ERRORS.** He looked around in search of this great first cause. He beheld the sun as he performed his apparent journey round the globe. When his beams were tempered with gentleness, it was spring: when they poured their most fervid radiance upon the earth, it was summer: their continued vivification produced the maturity of autumn; and their total absence, or partial influence, the storms and the gloom of winter. But, when he reappeared, the snow dissolved, rivers flowed afresh, and the face of nature was renewed. Of all the objects around him, which could be so likely to be the God of nature? or, in the eye of philosophy itself, what presented so perfect a resemblance of the Deity? The Persian raised him an altar, and bowed with fervour before his shrine.

But the sun was not the only benefactor of man. Night spread her mantle over him, and he sought repose. The moon lighted him from his labour, and diffused a silvery, partial illumination upon the face of creation, which before her rising was enveloped in perfect obscurity. In her appearance she resembled the ruler of the day; and the conclusion was irresistible, that she ought to divide with him the honours of worship. Thus, while the sun scorched the head of the adoring Persian, the worshippers of the moon rent the air with shouting, "Great is Diana of the Ephe-

sians." Still but *two* of the hosts of heaven were considered. The smaller appearances of light, kindled in the skies, during the absence of the sun, were deemed of the same nature and supposed to answer the same purposes, with the larger; and it was at length inferred that they also should be remembered as objects of adoration; although possibly *subordinately* to the others, as they were inferior in glory. HENCE SPRANG POLYTHEISM.

The arts and sciences in the mean time advanced; and while they were erecting for themselves splendid habitations, they thought that their deities ought to derive some honour from the enlargement of useful knowledge. Temples arose, and altars were elevated. There the worshipper adored his supposed deity with greater convenience. A resemblance of his God occurred to his mind, as desirable. The idea was eagerly adopted. On some altars the fire flamed, as the purest emblem of the sun. Others copied the figure of the waxing moon, and described a crescent. Others adored the resemblance of a star.\* But the Egyptian, ever ready in symbols, considered the qualities of his deities; and whether they were energy or fervour as in the sun, or gentleness and softness as in the moon, he represented them by the unbending strength of manhood, or the mild, dignified chastity of the woman. When the mind had once seized the counterpart of its imaginary god in nature, there quickly sprang up an Apollo, and a Hercules, and a Diana. HERE AROSE IMAGE WORSHIP.

Nor did human infatuation end here. Every object around them was deified. The heavens, the air, the sea, the very earth, were adored under the names of Jupiter, Juno, Neptune, and Cybele. The catalogue was swelled to infinity! Their fellow men whom they either feared or loved, were exalted to heavenly dominion. A conqueror deluged the world in blood. Desolation attended his footsteps. The wreath with which he bound his forehead was nurtured in the field of slaughter, and washed in the tears of widows and orphans. Sighs filled the floatings of his banner; and he drove his chariot with frozen insensibility over the slain in the midst of the battle. He was a curse to the earth, and execrated by the nations. He enlarged indeed the limits of his empire; but every inch of ground added to his own dominions, was an encroachment upon those of his neighbours, and was purchased at the expense of the heart's blood of his contemporaries. After his death, dazzled by his exploits, his infatuated subjects paid him divine honours, and placed him among their worthless deities. One man taught his

\* Acts vii. 43.



countrymen to cast seed into the ground, after it had been broken up, and thus to cause "the little one to become a thousand:" and he was worshipped as presiding over the fruits of the earth. Another availed himself of the cloudless atmosphere of Babylon, and ascending a lofty tower, made early observations on the heavenly bodies: he was adored as the king of heaven. A third, by dint of attention, foretold the return of periodical winds; and he was worshipped as having charge of the storms, under the name of Æolus. A fourth crossed the ocean, and in a frail bark committed himself to the mercy of the winds and waves. Both the hero and his ship were instantly translated to the skies; and at this hour a constellation in the heavens bears their name, and keeps the daring enterprise in remembrance. While a fifth, discovering medicinal virtues in plants, and applying them with success in certain cases, became the god of medicine, was said to unpeople the grave, and was adored under the name of Esculapius.\* To pursue the subject, would be useless and wearisome: every part of the heavens, the earth, the air, the sea, and the supposed infernal world, was crowded with deities; and every succeeding tyrant, as the first act of his reign, gave his merciless predecessor a place among the gods.

While they all professedly admitted that there was one supreme being who presided over their multiplied divinities, and held them all in subjection, they perpetually disagreed on the point to whom this honour belonged; and the supreme deity of one country, held only a subordinate place in another.

Respecting the attributes of the objects of their worship, they discovered unequalled ignorance and impiety. We are compelled to draw a veil over the principles and operations of these pretended deities; for the tale is too gross to recite in the ear of modesty; and the picture could not meet the eye without calling up a blush of shame, sorrow, and indignation, on the cheek of innocence. Who must not shudder with horror when he reads, that these sons of reason and philosophy, ascribed to the holy and invisible God, uncleanness, and every detestable vice?† We will pass on from the nature and number of their deities, to consider,—

2. THEIR WORSHIP OF GOD. Their religious adoration, so called, was such as would have been better suited to the house of a harlot, than to the temple of God. Lasciviousness was sanctioned, encouraged, and practised, under the holy and venerable name of

\* See note 1, at the end of this Lecture.

† The gross impurity to which this paragraph alludes, was principally ascribed in the mythology of the heathens to Jupiter, their *supreme* deity.

religion. The more infamous the rites, the more acceptable were they supposed to be to the Deity. The apostle Paul has delineated in strong colours, the affecting depravity of that dreary and comfortless period.

“Because when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations; and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools; and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God, into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness.—Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections——”

The whole of this awful and well-founded accusation, which contains in it things not to be so much as named among us, is given in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, from the twenty-first verse to the end. And he who has read the Satires of Juvenal, or is at all acquainted with the history of those times, cannot dispute for a moment the fidelity of the apostle's testimony.

It is the first principle of our nature to believe the existence of a God; and the first dictates of our reason, that, admitting this existence, we are bound to serve him, to obey him, and to sacrifice whatever we hold most dear to his demand. This is the dictate of reason, assisted or unassisted by the light of revelation. The Bible has directed this conviction to a proper object, and has specified the sacrifice which we should make, and the offering which duty requires us to present, when it says, “I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.” When “darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people,” the self-same principles were held; but alas! they were not directed to a right object! It is affecting to see the wretched and ignorant sons of men obeying the dictates of reason on this point, and, convinced that sacrifices ought to be presented to the Deity, concluding that he was “altogether such a one as themselves,” and forming a false estimate of his character and perfections, offering all that was most precious to them, to the extinction of parental feeling, and in contempt of the voice of humanity. See yonder Druid, with fierceness glaring in his eyes, and the consecrated branch in his hand, polluting thy soil, O Britain! with the ashes of hundreds of victims consumed in an enormous image! But soft—we promised to produce examples only from polished nations, and from

empires at the zenith of their glory. And we shall not have read far in the pages which record the brightest splendours of antiquity, before we find the "pitiful women" offering her first-born for her "transgression, the fruit of the body for the sin of the soul," the mother "forgetting her sucking child," and "ceasing to have compassion upon the son of her womb." My heart fails me, and the blood curdles in my veins with horror, when I recollect that it was a custom common among the Carthaginians to sacrifice children to Saturn. The statue of that idol was of brass, and formed with extended arms; but so constructed, as to suffer whatever was placed upon them, to fall into a fierce fire, flaming in a furnace at the foot of the image. The trembling parent approached with a countenance of ease which ill concealed the anguish of the heart, and presented his child. The distracted mother imprinted, with a parched lip, a last kiss upon the blooming cheek of her smiling infant. The ferocious priest, clothed in scarlet, received the unconscious babe from the maternal embrace; and placing it on the arms of this infernal image, it fell into the fire. At that instant the drums were beat, and the air rang with acclamations from the surrounding multitude, to cover the agony of the bereaved parents, and to drown the shrieks of the consuming victim! On one occasion,\* two hundred children of the first families in Carthage, were thus immolated! and on their annual sacrifices those who had no children were accustomed to purchase those of the poor for this horrible purpose.†

These are thy boasted triumphs, O reason! May God graciously preserve to us the teachings of the scriptures! At this mournful review of the blood-stained trophies of cruel and inexorable superstition, surely every parent must feel the necessity, and value the blessing of a divine revelation! Hail, Christianity! It was thine to teach us "a more excellent way:" it was thine to overthrow the altars erected to an "unknown God," and defiled with human blood: it was thine to do away the impure rites which cannot be named without a blush, for the weakness and the wickedness of human nature: it was thine to roll the dark portentous cloud from the understanding: it was thine to demand the peaceful, noble sacrifice of the body by the crucifixion of its lusts and passions! And it is a *reasonable* service; for it is consonant with the purest dictates of reason: it is not a grievous service: it violates no principle of nature: it tortures no feeling of humanity. It is the *only* reasona-

\* When Agathocles was about to besiege Carthage.

† Plutarch de Superstitione. See also note 2, at the end of this Lecture.



ble service which man can offer, and which is worthy the acceptance of Deity: yet which, but for the light of revelation, had never been discovered. Thy peace-speaking voice requires no blood to be shed; for the "sacrifice for sin" has already been presented in the death of Jesus Christ: it requires no mortification of our feelings but such as are depraved, and which were introduced into the mind by sin; but which are not the genuine feelings of humanity, because they were not implanted in the day when God made man "in his own image." The only slaughter demanded on thy altar, is that of vice and immorality, of a bitter, unforgiving spirit, of a proud, imperious, untractable disposition, of a useless ungodly life!

But we pass on to another review of the state of the heathen world; and argue the necessity of a divine revelation, from—

## II. THEIR CIVIL INSTITUTIONS; AND THEIR DEFECTIVE MORALS.

1. THEIR CIVIL INSTITUTIONS. Vice was tolerated; the principles of humanity were violated; and parental feelings tortured. Suicide was esteemed the strongest mark of heroism; and the perpetrators of it, who ought to have been branded with everlasting infamy, were celebrated by their historians and poets, as men of superior minds. Implacable hatred to enemies was deemed a virtue; and an unforgiving spirit was cherished, and esteemed manly fortitude. Hamilcar, the father of Hannibal, caused his child, at the age of nine years, to swear, that he would never be reconciled to the Romans. The infamous traffic with human blood was permitted in its utmost extent; and, alas! is continued to this day among nations professedly Christian; although the mild and gentle precepts of the gospel plead against it; and religion and humanity unite their voices to demand of the oppressor, "What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth from the ground!" Permission was given to the citizens, on certain occasions, to kill their slaves. One of the wisest legislators of the heathen world, commanded that all children should be exposed, who appeared in any respect maimed or defective: and thus was the horrible practice of destroying infants who did not seem likely to be of service to the state, not merely openly tolerated, but expressly instituted. The result of these prevailing opinions and pernicious institutions, was as might be expected,

2. A MOST DEFECTIVE SYSTEM OF MORALS. Depravity was the inevitable consequence of so barbarous a system. The world was an aceldama—a perpetual scene of violence on some occasions, when it was agitated by ambition; and on others, in seasons of peace, was polluted by every abominable and nameless vice. Vir-

tue was a mere shadow—a name. It was serviceable as a subject of eulogy in the schools; but was little reduced to practice; and for the most part, their very virtues leaned to the side of unnatural severity. In the fragments of antiquity, we meet with some beautiful pieces of morality: but, unfortunately, the history of those times proves, that the deportment even of the persons who wrote these admirable precepts, contradicted all their recommendations; and that they broke, one by one, every rule which they prescribed to others. We are moved with pity in reviewing ages, when men thought and wrote so well; and lived so immorally. So many vices were called by the name of virtue, that it is difficult to imagine, what they would call vice, save cowardice. Their most eminent and enlightened characters were guilty of crimes not to be recited; and the general character of the whole heathen world was, that they were “given over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which were not convenient.” The palaces of the Cæsars raised their imperial turrets to the skies, crowned with matchless magnificence: but within, they were stained with every species of impurity. It is not possible to read the account given of these monarchs who held the sceptre of the world, without pity and indignation. The narration of Suetonius, alternately elevates and depresses, informs and pollutes the mind of the reader: and if one moment we follow the warrior through his victories, and participate his triumph, the next discovers him to us in his retirement, an object of horror and disgust, “committing all manner of uncleanness with greediness.” The general contamination may well be imagined, when Horace obscures his genius with shameless indecency, and the elegant pen of Virgil sullied his pages with impurity. I dare not refer to my authority for this mortifying statement; but it is a subject, which, alas, admits of no dispute. We observe, in general, respecting the heathen world,

3. THAT THEIR SYSTEMS WERE TOO REFINED FOR THE COMMON PEOPLE. And here Christianity triumphs. Its morality is pure, simple, intelligible, adapted to the meanest capacity. All other religions on the face of the earth were formed, for the most part, for the rich, and for the wise. This was a grand defect in their system. Their theology was so complex, that the philosopher alone could comprehend its refinements, while the vulgar were abused with the grossest fables, as a substitute for religion. Its mysteries were professedly held back from the scrutiny of the crowd. But the gospel is the consolation of the poor. It has no mysteries which are dark to a plain understanding, and fathomable by the wise: no mysteries but such as are necessarily beyond the

limited comprehension of reason; therefore equally obscure to the peasant and to the philosopher. Of its fundamental principles, "a way-faring man" is a competent judge; and they descend to the level of his uncultured intellect. Other religions required splendid sacrifices, such as a poor man could not present; priestly demands were made, beyond his ability of performance: and the temple was barred against him, because he could not pay the fee of entrance. But the religion of Jesus addresses itself to every description of men; and hides the poor under the shadow of its wings, from the ills and the injuries of life. Its adaptation to human infirmity, is universal. Other religions were the religions of the city, of the empire, of the century: and varied with the changes of custom. But Christianity is equally suited to the east, the west, the north, or the south; it is adapted to the European, the African, the Asiatic, and the American: all are implicated in the charges it brings against human nature, all are drawn in the characters it delineates, and all are interested in the discoveries which it makes of life and immortality. But we forbear—we are not desirous to pronounce a eulogium on revelation, but to prove its necessity from the state of the heathen world before its introduction; in order to which, we request your attention farther, to

### III.—THEIR UNCERTAIN CONJECTURES IN RELATION TO FUTURITY.

To the mind even of the philosopher, futurity was, like the chaos of Moses, fathomless, empty, without shape or order, and "darkness was upon the face of the deep." The poets sang of Elysian fields and Tartarean punishments; but these were regarded as the flights of an ardent imagination; and the fictions under which their theories were buried, were openly rejected by the wisest among them. Who does not pity the genius of the immortal Homer, labouring under the pressure of this mournful ignorance? In vain he stretches the wing of his imagination to penetrate the secrets of futurity—not an object could be seen through the gloom. In vain he would carry the torch of reason in the world of spirits—the shadows of death extinguish it. When he draws the picture of eternity with the pencil of fancy, he makes his greatest hero prefer a miserable life, laden with all the woes of this valley of tears, to the highest honours which can be bestowed after death.\* Some of the most enlightened among them, agitated the question respecting the immortality of the soul; yet their reasoning led them no higher than conjecture, and they

\* See note 3, at the end of this Lecture.



could not attain the firmness of persuasion. Nor had it ever entered into their most sanguine expectations respecting the body, that HE who first constructed the machine, and took it in pieces, should again put it together, and frame it for immortality. This was an idea so totally novel to them, that when Paul preached at the Areopagus, before the polished and enlightened Athenians, "Jesus and the resurrection of the dead, some mocked:" others said, "He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods;" while a few concluded that they would "hear him again of this matter."

Revelation has done that for man, which neither reason nor philosophy could effect. In the exercise of the powers of our mind, upon the scenery by which we are surrounded, we rise to the great Parent of all; and deduce some conclusions respecting his nature, from the operations of his hand: yet have we seen that these conclusions were frequently erroneous. The religion of nature cannot go farther than to teach us, that there is a God, all-powerful, all-wise, all-good; and this is more than it taught the heathen world perfectly. But it leaves us ignorant of our relation to him: it is unable to unravel the more interesting parts of his character; it cannot develope the harmony of his attributes. A thousand inquiries are suggested, to which we receive no answer. We are placed in circumstances, for which, on principles of reason, we cannot account; and perceive the existence of evil, unable to discover its source. We labour under a curse, from which, by the light of nature, we see no deliverance; and are in possession of an existence, for which we perceive no adequate end. Those things which are the most interesting, are also the most uncertain; and that which we know naturally, only serves to kindle a thirst to learn more, which, on the principles of nature and reason merely, cannot be satiated. For what has the light of philosophy done, but rendered darkness visible? It has strained the powers of reason and imagination, till they could be stretched no farther; yet without bringing one hidden truth to light. It has perplexed and bewildered the mind by contradictory hypotheses. It has exhausted the charms of eloquence, and enervated the force of argument, in establishing favourite systems upon the ruins of those which preceded them, only to be pulled down in their turns, to make way for others equally absurd, and equally false. After dragging us through mazes of intricate reasoning, it leaves us precisely at the point at which it found us, all uncertainty, obscurity, and suspense. "The world by wisdom know not God." We appeal to facts—they are before you—and we confidently expect your decision upon their testimony.

It is here that Revelation takes up the process, and disperses the mist of uncertainty. It professes not indeed to *reason* upon subjects beyond the comprehension of the human mind; but it reveals the *fact* and requires our assent to it: which we may safely give, although we do not comprehend the whole of that which is revealed. Those parts which we *do* comprehend, we conceive to be true and wise: may we not reasonably conclude that those which we do *not* completely understand are equally so; and that the deficiency is in our natural powers, and not in the subject investigated? Those who call upon you to relinquish *your* Bibles, have not attempted to fathom the depths of futurity. They rather wish you to consider the scanty period of "three-score years and ten," the boundary of the hopes, the joys, and the expectations of man. They place beyond death—ANNIHILATION! The thought is insufferable! Say, you who have dropped the parting tear into the grave of those whom you loved,—is this a consoling system? Are the most tender connexions dissolved to be renewed no more? Must I resign my brother, my parent, my friend, my child—FOR EVER? What an awful import these words bear! Standing upon the grave of my family, must I say to its departed members,—"Farewell! ye who were once the partners of my joys and sorrows! I leaned upon you for support; I poured my tears into your bosom; I received from your hands the balm of sympathy—But it is no more! No more shall I receive your kindness; no more shall I behold you! The cold embrace of death clasps your mouldering bodies; and the shadows of an impenetrable midnight brood FOR EVER upon your sepulchres!"—No! We cannot relinquish Christianity for a system which conducts us to this fearful close! When scepticism shall have provided a substitute for our present hopes, we will listen with more confidence to its proposals.

And yet the cry of modern philosophy is against the only pledge of immortality afforded the human race. Where is the *gratitude* of such conduct? Are we not indebted to it for all the illumination which we enjoy? Did paganism disappear, till Christianity exerted her benign influence? Did not man, in a state of nature, demand and offer human victims? And did not Revelation stay the effusion of blood, and abolish these infamous rites? Is it not friendly to science and civilization? Is it not inimical to whatever is injurious to the interests of man? Where is the *wisdom* of such an opposition? Before you banish this, produce a better system: show us "a more excellent way:" teach us morality more sublime? What is its *crime*? Sedition? Impossible! It "puts us in mind to be

subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work." Want of philanthropy? Surely not! Some may bear its name who do not breathe its spirit: but their bigotry and illiberality are not chargeable upon Christianity—Christianity, which teaches "to speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, showing all meekness unto all men." It substitutes faith for good works; and its professed teachers set up opinion against morality! It is a gross calumny! It blends these nominally jarring principles: it assigns to each its proper place: it requires the influence, and commands the agency, both of the one and the other: it joins together those things which men frequently separate; and with equal consistency and plainness, traces the causes and effects of salvation: it has prescribed—"these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God, be careful to maintain good works."

Extinguish the light afforded by this despised volume, and you are precisely in the situation of the heathen world. I close the Bible; and there remains to you a hope without a foundation, assaulted by a thousand dismal apprehensions. The planets which roll over your head, declare matchless wisdom, and incalculable immensity. They write in the heavens, the name of Deity; and the attributes of power, majesty, and immutability. But where is the record of pardon? It is neither written by the sun-beam; nor wafted on the breeze. Where is the record of immortality? It is not inscribed on the face of the heavens; nor revealed by the operations of nature. "The depth saith, It is not in me! and the sea saith, It is not in me!" Look abroad into creation. "Canst thou, by searching, find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is high as heaven, what canst thou do? deeper than hell, what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth; it is broader than the sea!"

From what has been advanced, we conclude, that the state of man, considered as destitute of a revelation of the mind and will of God, is truly deplorable. So convinced was Socrates of this, that, from the uncertain decisions of reason on the most important subjects, he not only concluded that such a divine revelation was necessary; but expressed his persuasion, that such a communication would be made.\*

If you admit the existence of a God, you must grant, that it is *possible* for him to give such a revelation. When it is so essential to the happiness of man, can we believe that a Being so infinite-

\* See note 4, at the end of this Lecture.



ly gracious as the Deity, would suffer us to remain without this source of consolation? If a revelation be necessary, it is *probable*: and if it be probable, where are we to expect it? In the mythology of the heathens? In the Koran? In the "Age of Reason?" or in the Bible? Has there ever been a book produced, that has any pretensions to inspiration, this volume excepted? And are not *its* claims arising from external and internal evidences, irresistible? "We speak as to wise men, judge ye what we say!"

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### NOTES.

**NOTE 1.**—It would not be difficult to enlarge the catalogue of idols, enumerated in page 14 and 15, of the preceding Lecture, and to assign the different causes of their deification: but to unfold their character, which in that case it would be necessary to do, would be an ungracious task to the writer, and would afford no pleasure to the reader. Our immortal poet has given an ample list of the objects of heathen adoration, under their scriptural names; which will be more familiar to the Bible reader; and while he has veiled their actions in modest language, he has adorned the sad catalogue, so far as it is possible to ornament a barren list, with the nervous eloquence of his majestic versification. An abbreviation of his recital is extracted.

"Say, Muse, their names *then* known, who first, who last,  
Rous'd from the slumber, on that fiery couch,  
At their great emperor's call, as next in worth  
Came singly where he stood on the bare strand,  
While the promiscuous crowd stood yet aloof.

First **MOLOCH**,\* horrid king, besmear'd with blood  
Of human sacrifice, and parents' tears;  
Though for the noise of drums and timbrels loud,  
Their children's cries unheard, that pass'd through fire  
To this grim idol. Him the Ammonite  
Worshipp'd in Rabba and her watery plain,  
In Argob and in Basan, to the stream  
Of utmost Arnon.—————

Next **CHEMOS**, th' obscence dread of Moab's sons  
From Aroar to Nabo, and the wild  
Of southmost Abarim; in Hesebon  
And Horonaim, Seon's realm, beyond  
The flowery dale of Sibma, clad with vines,  
And Elëalé to th' Asphaltic pool.  
**PEOR**, his other name, when he entic'd  
Israel in Sittim.—————

With these came they who from the bordering flood  
Of old Euphrates to the brook that parts  
Egypt from Syrian ground, had general names  
Of **BAALIM** and **ASHTAROTH**; those male,  
These feminine.—————

\* It is not easy to determine to which of the heathen deities these Hebrew names apply. *Saturn*, probably: for his rites are nearly the same.

—————With these in troop  
Came Ashtaro<sup>h</sup>; whom the Phenicians call'd  
ASTARTE,\* queen of heaven, with crescent horns,  
To whose bright image nightly, by the moon,  
Sidonian virgins paid their vows and songs.

—————THAMMUZ† came next behind,  
Whose annual wound in Lebanon allur'd  
The Syrian damsels to lament his fate  
In amorous ditties all a summer's day.

—————Next came one  
Who mourn'd in earnest, when the captive ark  
Maim'd his brute image—————  
DAGON‡ his name, sea-monster, upward man  
And downward fish:—————  
—————dreaded through the coast  
Of Palestine.—————  
Him follow'd RIMMON, whose delightful seat  
Was fair Damascus.—————

—————After these, appear'd  
A crew, who, under names of old renown,  
OSIRIS, ISIS, ORUS, and their train,  
With monstrous shapes and sorceries abus'd  
Fanatic Egypt and her priests, to seek  
Their wandering gods, disguis'd in brutish forms  
Rather than human. Nor did Israel 'scape  
Th' infection, when their borrow'd gold compos'd  
The calf in Oreb; and the rebel king  
Doubled that sin in Bethel and in Dan.

The rest were long to tell, though far renown'd;  
Th' Ionian gods, of Javan's issue held  
Gods, yet confess'd later than heav'n and earth,  
Their boasted parents: TITAN, heav'n's first-born,  
With his enormous brood, and birth-right, seiz'd  
By younger SATURN; he from mightier JOVE,  
His own and RHEA's son, like measure found;  
So Jove usurping reign'd: these first in Crete  
And Ida known, thence on the snowy top  
Of cold Olympus rul'd the middle air,  
Their highest heaven: or on the Delphian cliff,  
Or in Dodona,|| and through all the bounds  
Of Doric land; or who with SATURN old  
Fled over Adria to th' Hesperian fields,  
And o'er the Celtic roam'd the utmost Isles."

Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Book 1. L. 376—521.

NOTE 2.—The custom of the Carthaginians of consuming children in honour of Saturn.

Diodorus Siculus had been saying, that as the enemy approached the city, the Carthaginians imagined that they had offended Saturn by restraining their human sacrifices: he adds, διορθώσασθαι δὲ τὰς ἀγνοίας σπεύδοντες, διακοσίους μὲν τῶν ἐπιφανεστῶτων παίδων προκρίναντες ἔθυσαν δημοσίᾳ: therefore that they might correct their errors without delay, they immolated in public sacrifice two hundred chosen boys of their principal nobility. And he thus describes the idol Saturn: ἦν δὲ παρ' αὐτοῖς ἀνδρείας Κρόνου χαλκοῖς, ἐκ τετακώς τὰς χεῖρας ὑπὸ πλάσας ἐγκεκλιμε-

\* Called also Luna, Diana, Hecate.  
§ The oracle of Apollo.

† Adonis.  
|| The oracle of Jupiter.

‡ Probably Neptune.

νας ἐπὶ τὴν γην, ὥστε τὸν ἐπιτεθέντα τῶν παίδων ἀποκυλίεσθαι, καὶ πίπτειν εἰς τὴν χάσμα πληρὴς πυρός: *For there was with them a brazen statue of Saturn, which held its extended arms so inclined towards the earth, that the child, when placed upon it, rolled off, and plunged into a furnace full of fire.*

DIOD. SIC. LIB. XX.

Justin speaks of the same cruel superstition, thus: "Homines ut victimas immolabant; et impuberes (quæ ætas etiam hostium misericordiam provocat) aris admovebant, pacem deorum sanguine eorum exposcentes, pro quorum vitâ dii rogari maximè solent." *They immolated men as victims; and children, whose tender years excited the pity even of enemies, they placed upon their altars, purchasing peace of the gods by the blood of those for whose life the gods were accustomed principally to be implored.* JUST. HIST. LIB. XVIII. CAP. 6.

This horrible custom is mentioned also by HERODOTUS, LIB. VII.

The English reader may consult ROLLIN'S Ancient History, Vol. I. p. 273.

NOTE 3.—These are the melancholy sentiments which Homer puts into the mouth of the shade of Achilles:

ὦς ἐφάμην· ὁ δὲ μ' αὐτίκ' ἀμειβόμενος προσέειπεν·  
Μη δὴ μοι θάνατόν γε παραύδα, Φαίδιμ' Ὀδυσσεύ·  
Βυλοίμην κ' ἐπάρχρος ἐὼν θητεύμεν ἄλλω  
Ἀνδρὶ παρ' ἀκλῆρῳ, ὃ μὴ βίोटος πολὺς εἴη,  
Ἡ πᾶσιν νεκύεσσι καταφθιμένοισιν ἀνάσσειν.

Hom. Odyss. Lib. xi. 486—490.

Talk not of ruling in this dol'rous gloom,  
Nor think vain words (he cry'd) can ease my doom.  
Rather I choose laboriously to bear  
A weight of woes, and breathe the vital air,  
A slave to some poor hind that toils for bread,  
Than reign the sceptred monarch of the dead!"

Pope's Odyss. Book xi. l. 595—600.

NOTE 4.—Socrates is represented by Plato as thus expressing his expectations of a legislator qualified to reveal the mind of Deity to the human race: "that it is necessary to wait till such a personage shall appear to teach them how they ought to conduct themselves, both towards God, and towards man." He goes on to exclaim with fervour—"O when shall that period arrive! And who shall be that teacher? How ardently do I desire to see this man, who he is! Ἀναγκαῖον ἔστι περιμένειν ἕως ἄν τις μάθῃ ὡς δεῖ πρὸς Θεοῦ καὶ πρὸς Ἀνθρώπου διακεῖσθαι. Πότε ἔν παρῆσαι ὁ Χρόνος ἔστος; Καὶ τίς ὁ παιδεύσων; ἡδίστη γὰρ ἂν μοι δοκῶ ἰδεῖν τῶτον τὸν ἄνθρωπον τίς ἐστίν." Alcibiad. II. de Precat.

In reference to the same personage he says, that this Legislator must be of higher than human extraction: for that as beasts are governed by men, must man be guided by a nature superior to his own. De Leg. lib. 4.



## LECTURE II.

## THE CREATION.

## GEN. I. 1.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

SENSE, reason, and faith, may be considered as progressive steps, by which the mind ascends to the invisible God. Creation is an object of Sense. The light which shines upon my path is an emblem of the purity of Deity. The meridian sun is an image of *his* uncreated glory, who is the centre of every system. Whether I gaze upon the heavens, and trace the revolutions of orbs which move there: or follow the eccentric comet through its protracted sphere, so far as it is visible: or examine the insect that flits by me, or the blade of grass upon which I trample: I perceive the operations, and adore the wisdom of the Divinity. His voice speaks in the thunder-storm; and when his lightning bursts from the bosom of the dark cloud, "my flesh trembleth for fear of his judgments." Fanned with the breath of the morning, or the gale of the evening: standing in this plain, or on that mountain: dwelling on the dry land, or floating on the surface of the deep—I am still with God.

Reason takes up the process where sense fails. It deduces inferences respecting invisible things from those "which do appear." Nature wafts the mind to the Creator. From its majesty, Reason argues his greatness: from its endless variety, his bounty, from its uses, his wisdom. The foundation of the Temple of Knowledge is laid deep, wide, and lasting on the face of the universe. Reason seizes such materials as sense can furnish, and carries on the building. But, alas, the edifice remains incomplete! The architect is skilful; but the materials are scanty. Those which are most essential to crown the work, lie far from this country beyond the grave. In vain imagination lends her assistance, and attempts to explore the land of spirits, where only they are to be found. Bewildered, exhausted, and powerless, the artist sits down in silent despair.

Here Faith takes up the tools which fell from the hand of Rea-

son. Revelation ascertains all that futurity had concealed; and Faith draws her materials from Revelation. The building rises, and shall continue to rise, till "the top-stone is brought forth with shouting." For "faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

Sense cannot introduce us to the invisible Majesty of heaven. It can only present us with his image. The pure, ethereal light—the blaze of a noontide sun—the azure heavens and revolving orbs—the mysterious, eccentric comet—the insect curiously wrought, and the grass simply elegant—the thunder-storm—the lightning vivid and irresistible—the morning and evening breeze—the verdant plain and the elevated mountain—the solid earth, and the rolling seas—these all reflect the glory of Deity, all bear the impress of his hand, all develope his wonderful agency—but they are not **GOD HIMSELF.**

Reason ascends a little higher; and from the volume of nature, through the medium of sense, unfolds a little of the Divine nature, and a few of his perfections. His immensity, his wisdom, his liberality, may be inferred from every thing which I behold: but, alas, I am still at a distance from God! What is he to *me*? What does he require? Have I disobeyed the dictates of reason at any time? or neglected to serve him? If so, will he pardon sin? and how am I to receive forgiveness? Neither reason nor sense can answer these inquiries, nor silence the clamours of conscience.

It is faith rising on the wing of Revelation that introduces me into the heaven of heavens, unlocks the mystery, and unfolds the seven-sealed book. Here I read the covenant of mercy. Here I receive the promise of pardon. Here I learn all that I would know, and anticipate all that I shall hereafter enjoy. The pressure of the ills of life is lightened; and I "endure as seeing Him who is invisible."

Who can behold the fair structure of the heavens and the earth without feeling a powerful desire to understand their origin, and to be acquainted, in some measure at least, with the Architect who reared them? Cold is the heart which kindles not into devotion, when the skies blaze with a thousand lamps; and grovelling the mind, which rises not through the system of the Universe to the Great First Cause! Blind is that understanding which cannot see, amidst the vicissitudes of seasons, and the changing blessings of the Spring, the Summer, the Autumn, and the Winter, the superintendence of a faithful Friend, and the bounty of an unwearied Benefactor! Insensible is that man who can look upon this grand machinery, and live in the bosom of creation, yet perceive no harmony, no order, no loveliness, no design; or upon whom they make no im-

pression! Let the friend of *my* choice be one who can relish the majesty of nature: who, on the close of the day, from the summit of some lofty mountain, will watch the rising cloud, and observe the evening spread her gray and dusky mantle over the features of the landscape, till they are lost and extinguished: whose eye is fixed with delight on the stars as they break one by one through the increasing obscurity; and who, withdrawing from the world, can relish retirement, nor envy the dissipation of life, as he hears its noise swelling on the gale of the evening. The "Friend of God," and the admirer of nature, is the man whom I would choose as my companion, and love as my own soul.

It is not possible for the spirit of man to be encircled with the present Deity, without inquiring after the Fountain of existence. Every thing above us, around us, beneath us,—lives. Every clod of earth teems with animation. Every drop of water swarms with animalcules; imperceptible, indeed, to the naked eye, but plainly visible when the organ of vision receives assistance from art. Probably myriads floating in the air which we breathe, are drawn into the lungs in the act of respiration. Curiosity must stimulate our researches, even if we had no other, and no better motive: nor can we examine, without emotions of gratitude, a system in which every thing ministers either to our necessities or to our convenience.

In truth, men of all ages, and at every period of time, have been solicitous to understand their own origin and *that* of things around them. Every power of the mind has been exerted, and no pains have been spared, in attempting to unravel this mystery. The spirit has been overwhelmed with extravagant and clashing hypotheses: or the man has sat down contented with uncertain rumours, and mutilated traditions. The stream of his knowledge rose from the pure and undefiled fountain of Revelation; but it gathered pollution from the channels through which it passed, before he stooped to drink its defiled wave. The systems formed by Reason, and that suggested by Revelation, are each to pass in review; and when they are contrasted, we hope to prove, THAT THE MOSAIC ACCOUNT OF THE CREATION IS THE ONLY RATIONAL ONE WHICH WE HAVE RECEIVED.

The different hypotheses of men, who either had not received Revelation, or who have refused its testimony and denied its pretensions, may be reduced to one of these two divisions: either that the world was the production of chance, or that it is eternal. The several opinions of ancient and modern times, appear to be neither more nor less, than ramifications or modifications of the one or the other of these systems. We shall examine them separately.



## I. THAT THE WORLD WAS PRODUCED BY CHANCE.

When we behold a complicated, yet harmonious and well-constructed machine, we may be ignorant of the hand that formed it, but we find no difficulty in assigning it a maker. No rational man would ever imagine that it was the production of chance: and if the idea were suggested to him, he would reject it with disdain as an insult to his reason. I gaze with delight upon a beautiful landscape-painting; colour melts into colour, and shade softens into shade. By the artful intermixture of light and of shadow, in some parts it dwindles into perspective; in others, it appears raised from the surface. Here, the figures seem to project from the canvass; and there the distant mountain, bounding the horizon, just shows its diminished elevation, scarcely distinguishable from the azure of the surrounding heavens. So exquisite is the combination of the various tints, that the instant I see it, I discover in it the hand of a master. Who in this assembly gazing upon a transparent orrery, to have a correct idea of the motions of the earth, and of the heavenly bodies, would suffer his imagination to rest for a moment on the supposition, that the machinery so admirably adapted to a certain definitive purpose, was constructed merely by accident, without design, without skill, and without a maker? And shall any man attempt to persuade you, that the solar system, of which it is but an imperfect resemblance, was formed, arranged, and regulated by chance? Let me see it produce the orrery, before I give it credit for the construction of the system! It is strange that men should so easily agree in assigning to inferior productions some adequate cause, yet deny it to superior operations: that they should with such facility discover the agency of man in all his works, and yet not discern the hand of God in the visible creation.

Plain sense, independent of laborious investigation, or superior intelligence, uncontaminated by corrupt principles, and unbiassed by inveterate prejudice, is sufficient to overthrow this absurd system. Let but the man of a common understanding look abroad into the economy of nature, and give in his evidence. Ask him, whether chance placed a boundary to the restless waves, and said, "Hitherto shall ye come, but no further?" or commanded the mountain to rise decked with verdure, and break the clouds as they passed? or clothed the valley with corn, and turned the course of the rivulet through it, to water the young plantation? or drew an atmosphere round this globe? or bade yonder worlds preserve invariably the same orbit, during six thousand years, around the same luminary?

Propose these questions to a mind of a common standard, accustomed to the exertion of its own powers, and unacquainted with the dispute between Revelation and Scepticism: and it is impossible that they should be answered in the affirmative. It would be less insane to conclude that the machine were self-constructed, and that chance disposed the several parts of the painting.

Those who demand the voice of reason on this subject shall be gratified by the testimony of a great man, to whom the light of Revelation never appeared. The mind of Cicero was too exalted to stoop to so degrading an hypothesis. He asks, "Can I forbear to wonder that there should ever be a man who could persuade himself, that this beautiful and well-finished world was produced by the fortuitous floating together of certain solid and indivisible bodies, necessarily moved by the force of their own gravity? I cannot imagine why he, who can thus conclude should not also think, that if innumerable types, (formed of gold or of any other substance, and representing the letters of the alphabet,) were cast carelessly upon the ground, they would form the annals of Ennius, so as to be perfectly intelligible: but I much doubt whether chance would be able to produce a single verse. How then can these men assert, that atoms without colour,\* without any of that quality which the Greeks call *ποιότης*,† and without intelligence, floating together at random, should by accident form a perfect world; or rather, an infinity of worlds, some of which are at every point of time produced, as others perish? But if this accidental concourse of atoms can make a world, why does it never form a portico, a house, a temple, a city, which might certainly be effected with much greater ease?"‡

Let us for a few moments select a part of the creation of God as a full answer to the absurd system under consideration, and as an indisputable evidence of infinite skill and of omnipotent agency. We are about to turn your reflections upon yourselves. Contemplate your own body: observe the union of its several parts, and their adaptation to the particular purposes for which they were designed. Mark the composition and configuration of the whole. What grace in movements! what beauty of countenance! what endless diversity of feature! what incomparable workmanship is perceptible in the whole frame! You discover bones marvellously

\* The Epicureans imagined that colour, heat, and similar qualities, belonged only to compound bodies; and that size and weight were the only properties of atoms: or roughness and smoothness, resulting from their configuration.

† *ποιότης*, qualitas, a quality.

‡ See note 1, at the end of this Lecture.

united, presenting a skeleton of the human form: fibres and nerves, fine and delicate in the extreme! muscles, possessing incredible strength, and singularly disposed: vessels, through which the stream of life flows, complicated, and branched into every part of the body: a spirit, at an unknown moment, and in an unsearchable manner, superadded to give impulse to the whole machine. In consequence of every volition of the mind, this and the other muscle is in motion: but no one can define the union between matter and spirit: and philosophy in vain attempts to lay her finger upon the spring which agitates the vibrations of ten thousand invisible fibres. The whole mass of blood is perpetually circulating through every channel, and returning to the heart black and improper for the purposes of life, till it has undergone an instantaneous chemical change, which is effected in the lungs by the air, and it flows on purified to pursue its unwearied course. If the air inhaled be unsuitable to perform this process, and unable to effect this change, immediate death is the inevitable consequence. Air, which has lost its elasticity in mines and similar places, or which is impregnated with mortal particles, has this sudden and awful influence upon the human frame. Who, with the smallest pretensions to reason, can affirm or believe, that such complex machinery is the production of chance? Galen, a celebrated heathen, was converted from atheism by contemplating a human skeleton, persuaded that workmanship so exquisite, and design so manifest, demonstrated the existence of a Creator. Yet is this human frame but a very small part of the divine agency. The same skill is visible in every, the meanest, insect, submitted to our inspection.

The Egyptians maintained the irrational system under consideration; and one should imagine that a more complete refutation could not be made, than their own statement of it. Diodorus Siculus has preserved it, and we submit it to your examination.

“At the commencement of all things, the elements of the heavens and the earth were blended, and they wore a uniform appearance. But afterwards these parts separated from each other, the world assumed the shape which we now behold, and the air received its perpetual motion. The fire ascended highest, because the lightness of its nature impelled it upwards; and for the same reason the sun and the stars move in an invariable circle. But that part which was gross and muddy, as also the fluid, sank down into one place, by the force of gravity. These elements perpetually floating and rolling together, from their moisture produced the sea, while from their more solid particles sprang the earth, as yet extremely soft and miry. But in proportion as the light of the sun began to shine



upon it, it became solid; and the surface of it, fermented by the warmth extracting its moisture, swelled, and exuded putrescences, covered over with a kind of thin skins, such as may still be observed in marshy or boggy places, when, the earth having been cool, the air is heated suddenly, and not by a gradual change. These putrescences, formed after this manner from the moisture of the earth extracted by the warmth, by night were nourished from the clouds spread all around, and in the day were consolidated by the heat. At length, when these embryos were arrived at their perfect growth, and the membranes by which they were enclosed were broken by the warmth, all sorts of living creatures instantly appeared. Those that had a larger proportion of heat in their natures, became birds and soared on high. Those that were of a gross and terrestrial kind, became reptiles and animals confined to the ground. While those who drew the most of their qualities from moisture, were gathered into an element corresponding with their natures, and became fish.”\*

It is scarcely possible to conceive of any thing more confused, inexplicable, and unphilosophical, than this hypothesis. Yet even in this account, deformed as it is by alterations, disguised by absurdity, and clouded with obscurity, something of the Mosaic system may be traced, which renders it probable that it might originally have sprung from his representation of chaos. There is this essential difference: *he* makes order and beauty to arise out of confusion and deformity under the forming, superintending hand of Deity: *they* ascribe it all to the agency of chance. When I speak of the *Mosaic* hypothesis, I would be understood to prefix his name to the scriptural system, only because he committed to writing the tradition of the generations which preceded him up to the birth of time, and not to insinuate that he was the inventor of the account contained in the first chapter of Genesis.

On the present occasion, and in the discussion of the present subject, I trust that it will be deemed sufficient if I merely mention a more modern hypothesis. It remained for the philosophers of the eighteenth century to discover that the earth and the other planets were originally parts of the sun, struck off from that immense body by the concussion of comets, and whirled into infinite space, by the rapidity of their motion acquiring their spherical form, and assuming their present appearance. It may be thought that this account of the creation evinces the fertility of their imaginations; but it may also be questioned whether it will place the laurel upon their heads, as accurate reasoners, or as illumined and sound phi-

\* See note 2, at the end of this Lecture.

losophers. Yet these are the men who arrogate to themselves the sole claim to reason, and who condemn as superstitious and irrational, all, who, rejecting their crude and extravagant systems, adhere to the plain, concise, and luminous account, transmitted to us by Moses.

But it is time that we should pass on to the consideration of the remaining hypothesis, viz.

## II. THAT THE WORLD IS ETERNAL.

Many celebrated names among the ancients supported this opinion; of whom were Ocellus Lucanus, Aristotle, the later Platonists, and Xenophanes, the founder of a sect called the Eleatic. Plato himself acknowledged that the world was created by the hand of God. It was, moreover, supported by many modern philosophers; among whom we may number Spinoza, Amalric, and Abelard; not to name those of our own day, some of whom hold the eternity of the world in its full sense; and others assign to it an antiquity much more remote than the scriptural account will allow. The heathen poets at large countenanced the former opinion, which proves that the popular sentiment of the Pagan world was, that what we deem creation, sprang from a chaos of which they appear to have no correct notion, under the influence of mere chance.\*

There are several modifications of the hypothesis of the world's eternity: but we feel it our duty to assign the reasons which appear to us to overthrow it, rather than to state the several senses in which it was held.

1. A valuable writer† has laid it down as an axiom, that if any thing be eternal, it is also self-existent and immutable. For a being is the same with all its properties taken together. We can have "no conception of any substance distinct from all the properties in which they inhere." On this principle, if any property be removed or destroyed, a *part* of that being would necessarily perish; which is inconsistent with its being necessary, and subverts its eternity *as a whole*. It cannot be said, that it is impossible for alterations to be made on the face of this globe, when its several parts are incessantly changing; and the inference, allowing this fact, is against its eternity.

2. The same ingenious author has collected and enumerated at length,‡ several philosophical and astronomical objections against

\* See note 3, at the end of this Lecture.

† Doddridge's Lectures, xxiv. Part II. page 47. Demonstration—connected with the preceding chain of propositions.

‡ See Doddridge's Lectures, Part II. page 47—50. Quarto edition.

this system. These have been urged by various writers; and we shall be satisfied with simply naming them. They are founded upon those immutable laws of nature by which the several parts of this grand system act in unison, so far as they have been discovered, and are comprehensible to us, and which are acknowledged by the world at large. They are to this effect: That the projectile force of the planets is continually diminishing; therefore, had the present system of things been eternally the same, they would long since have fallen into the sun. That the sun itself is continually losing some of its light, however small the proportion may be; and of course must have been utterly extinguished. That as the sun and the fixed stars are supposed to attract each other, they must, ere this, have met in the centre of gravity common to the whole universe. That as many substances are constantly petrifying and ossifying, the whole earth must have undergone the same change. And that as hills are continually subsiding, the surface of the whole globe must, ages ago, have been reduced to a level: for if it be urged that the numbers of those so subsiding are counterbalanced by others which we may suppose to have been raised by earthquakes and other violent convulsions, we answer—that the numbers so raised must be small compared with those reduced: not to say, that mountains raised by earthquakes are for the most part hollow, and are therefore naturally more disposed to subside and fall in. This hypothesis supposes that all mountains with which we are now acquainted, are the effects of earthquakes, (admitting that the original ones, through the effects of time, had been levelled, which would doubtless have been the case, had the world been eternal:) a supposition so absurd, that we need only appeal to such mountains as the Alps, the Peak of Teneriffe, and others, to overthrow it. Many others have been proposed, but we cheerfully leave these hypothetical speculations to the learned and the curious, the philosopher and the naturalist, and pass on to other considerations which we deem more important and more satisfactory.

3. We have no credible history of transactions more remote than six thousand years from the present time. The Chinese, the Egyptians, the Chaldeans, and the Phenicians, have all laid claim to much higher antiquity; but in bringing these pretensions to the test, it is clearly manifest that they do not deserve the credit which they demand. Their chronology is so absurdly extended, as to exceed the bounds of probability, and to excite suspicion in respect of the facts themselves, which are the subjects of their calculations. It has been stated, and rendered probable by the learned writers of the Universal History, in their account of the Tartars and the Chinese,



that a great part of China was very thinly peopled, so late as the year before Christ six hundred and thirty-seven, when the Scythians, under the conduct of Madyes, made an irruption into Upper Asia. We have a singular fact to state, which will prove that their boasted antiquity really falls within the limits of the Mosaic chronology. For the evidence which we are about to produce, we are indebted to the discoveries of modern astronomy. The Chinese have ever made a point of inserting in their calendars remarkable eclipses, or conjunctions of the planets, together with the name of that emperor in whose reign they were observed. To these events they have also affixed *their own dates*. There is a very singular conjunction of the sun, moon, and several planets, recorded in their annals as having taken place almost at the very commencement of their remote history. The far-famed Cassini, to ascertain the fact, calculated back, and decisively proves that such an extraordinary conjunction actually did take place at China, on February the twenty-sixth, two thousand and twelve years before Christ. This falls four hundred years after the flood, and a little after the birth of Abraham.\* Here are two important facts ascertained. The one is, that the Chinese *are* an ancient nation, although perhaps not at that time a very large one; and the other, that their pretensions to antiquity beyond that of Moses are unfounded: because this event, which they themselves represent as happening near the beginning of their immense calculations, falls far within the history and chronology of the scriptures.

The Egyptians pretended, in like manner, to possess an exact narration for some myriads of years. Their inaccuracy is demonstrable from a plain matter of fact. They professed to preserve the records of other ancient nations as well as of their own; and their evident fallacy in relation to other empires, marks the dependance which we ought to place in their history respecting themselves; and proves that we should receive their calculations with great caution, and under considerable limitations. When Alexander entered with his victorious army into Egypt, the priests professed to show him, out of their sacred annals, an account of the Macedonian and Persian empires through a period of eight thousand years: while it appears, from the best historical accounts, that the Persian empire

\* May I be permitted to recommend a small and well composed treatise, called "*The Christian Officer's Panoply*," written by an excellent officer in the marines now living, and personally known to me? It is published by Matthews. This singular fact is recorded in this little volume, which is the best compendium of evidences in favour of the Bible, and the most familiar I have ever seen. The style of writing adopted is at once entertaining and instructive; and I never received more of pleasure and of satisfaction, from any book which I ever perused.

was not then three hundred years old: nor had the Macedonian been founded quite five centuries. In order to establish their chronology, they make their first kings, on their own calculations, reign above twelve hundred years each; and for the same reason the Assyrians make their monarchs reign above forty thousand years. We might adduce a variety of similar instances of unbounded license in the pretensions of the Chaldeans, Phenicians, and some other nations. But it is unnecessary to pursue the inquiry farther. Such extravagance defeats its own purposes; since no dependance can be placed upon calculations so chimerical.\*

4. We are able to ascertain the periods when the most useful arts and sciences were invented; which could not be done with certainty, had the world been eternal, because many of them would have been involved and buried in the mist of extreme antiquity. Mark the progress of science! Observe how soon it arrives at the perfection of which it is capable! What elucidation the revolution of a few ages throws upon theories previously obscure! In the lapse of comparatively a very few years, the hand of time uncovers a fund of knowledge, which was veiled in perplexity and uncertainty. How many useful arts are invented, and how many interesting discoveries are made in the course of a single century! Calculate upon the most tardy progress of the arts imaginable, and determine whether those of which we are now in possession are at all equal to that which we might reasonably expect, if the world had been eternal, and if human genius and industry had been gradually, however slowly, penetrating the darkness, and dispersing the cloud of ignorance? If it be urged that floods and fires, and wars, with ten thousand nameless hypothetical desolations, may have destroyed a multitude of useful inventions; we answer, that the number of these must have been prodigious, indeed, and absolutely inconceivable, to produce a devastation of the arts which should be able to counterbalance the inventions of science, which, on the supposition of the world's eternity, might be expected. Nor could we with such facility determine the periods when these useful arts were discovered, if the chronology of the world really extended far beyond the Mosaic history. Admit that the world were twenty thousand years old: we should necessarily be in uncertainty with regard to the rise of the most simple and useful inventions, because of their extreme antiquity. The fact, on the contrary, is simply this: that the necessities and conveniences of life, civilization and commerce,

See Pearson on the Creed: page 58—60. Folio edition of 1669. Consult, also, Stillingfleet's *Origines Sacre*.

the inventions of the arts and sciences, the letters which we use, the language which we speak, have all known originals, may all be traced back to the first authors, and these all fall far within the circle of six thousand years, while none are found to exceed it—no, not one.

5. In the same manner we are able to trace the origin of different nations; which we could not do with certainty had the world been eternal. We can look back to the beginning of the greatest empires of the present day; and we can also mark the rise, the meridian splendour, and the decline of those which preceded them, till we arrive at a certain point beyond which we know nothing; and this point extends to about the standard assigned in the Mosaic account of the creation. Should earthquakes and floods be again pleaded, as having destroyed nations as well as sciences, and thus reduced the world to a second infancy—if any had remained, we might naturally conclude that the most useful arts had been preserved, and that some wrecks of mighty nations would have survived the desolation, at least, to tell the tale of two succeeding generations. But a system begins to be in danger, when those who maintain it are reduced to the necessity of supposing things which might, or might not, happen—where probabilities are against them—and when, if their arguments are admitted, the slender causes they assign, are in themselves inadequate to the production of effects so extensive as they wish to establish.

6. It may be necessary to notice a modern objection which has been urged against the Mosaic chronology; and which is designed to prove, that if the world be not eternal, it may still claim a much higher antiquity than is allowed in the Bible. It is in substance as follows:\*

“In pits or openings of the ground in the neighbourhood of Vesuvius and *Ætna*, beds of lava have been discovered at considerable depths below each other; and these, in some places, are covered with successive strata of vegetable mould.” These different strata have proceeded, it is said, from an equal number of irruptions from the mountain. Ten or twelve successive strata, overlaid with soil, have been discovered in the bowels of the earth; and it is strongly asserted, that, by digging deeper, many more might be found. It is ASSUMED that *a thousand years, at least*, are necessary to the production of a soil sufficient for the nourishment and

\* These objections to the Mosaic chronology are stated and refuted very much at large in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, article *Earth*. To the writer of this article I am indebted for the statement given above; and, for the most part, I have adhered to his language as best conveying his thoughts upon the subject.



growth of vegetables upon these volcanic lavas. If this be granted, and *twelve* such strata have been discovered, the antiquity of the earth is immediately swelled to, at least, twelve thousand years: which is more than double the Mosaic chronology. This, then, is the point upon which the whole controversy turns; and the answers that have been given to this objection may be laid down in the following order:

1. It is granted, by those who have written upon this subject, that some lavas are very solid, and others much less so. The one, of course, resists the operations of time much longer than the other. This, also, is admitted.

2. They have not determined of which sort the lavas in question are, which is a material inquiry: since, if a thousand years were required for the more solid, a much less time would be necessary for the farinaceous.

3. Soil gradually increases by decayed vegetables, and the sediments of snows and rain: the thickness or thinness of the soil must, therefore, determine whether a greater or less time has been employed in the accumulation; but these writers have not informed us of the dimensions of these subterraneous vegetable strata—another material circumstance in the calculation.

4. Volcanic ashes and muddy water are sometimes thrown out, designed, as it should seem, by nature, to repair the sterility occasioned by the lava; and these ought to be taken into the account, as materially assisting quickness of vegetative soil.

5. They have, however, furnished us with the following fact. The town of Herculaneum was destroyed by an irruption in the ninety-seventh year of the Christian era. ‘There are evident marks, that the matter of *six* irruptions,’ say they, ‘has taken its course over Herculaneum; for *each* of the six strata of lava is covered with a *vein of good soil*.’ Here, then, we have their own authority for *six* strata of good soil accumulated in less than seventeen hundred years: which, supposing them of equal thickness, instead of a *thousand* years, leaves us not *three hundred* for the production of each.”

At best, then, this objection is hypothetical merely; and upon the testimony of the objectors, a thousand years are not only unnecessary to the production of such strata, but *six* of them have actually been formed in less than seventeen hundred years; or less than three hundred for each: and we, therefore, see no solid reason to induce us to sacrifice the chronology of Moses, to the uncertain doctrine of vegetable strata.

We produce only one other consideration against the opinion of

the world's eternity; and that appears to us of very great importance.

6. If the world is eternal, how has the tradition of its beginning every where prevailed, although under different forms, among nations both barbarous and civilized? We leave the skeptic who disputes the Mosaic history, and the philosopher who asserts the eternity of the world, to answer this inquiry—it is not *our* business. The fact cannot be denied. Not only is it to be found among the refined nations of antiquity, but barbarians who then chased, and savages who still pursue, the wild and brute inhabitants of their own inaccessible forests, had, and yet have, some tradition of the creation of all things. It is not merely in England's metropolis that infidelity is encountered with the history of the beginning of the world; traditions of it are to be met with on the plains of Indostan, on the banks of the Ganges, and among every tribe and every nation, from the line of the equator to the circles of both the poles. It forms a part of every religion in the known world. Every country, although, perhaps, claiming an antiquity higher than we allow, and supposing the world to have been produced by chance, does, nevertheless, admit that it had a beginning. This was the universal doctrine of the heathen world; excepting that some of their philosophers, from the love of novelty, or the pride of distinction, disavowed the public sentiment. It was the common faith of all nations, and remains so. We appeal to the Phenician histories, to the Indians, and to the Egyptians. We read it in Linus, in Hesiod, in Orpheus, in Aratus, in Thales, and in a variety of Greek writers, too large to lay before you; all of whom embraced the idea that the world was created, and not eternal. From these, the Romans borrowed the same doctrines. Ovid, who closely transcribed these opinions from the Greeks, has given a long and eloquent description of the formation of the heavens, and the earth, and its several inhabitants.\* We repeat our question, How was it possible for the tradition of a beginning to the world, to be so universally prevalent, and so universally received, through every age, if it were indeed eternal?

From these representations we now wish to deduce a most interesting and important inference; and to establish a truth which lies at the foundation of all religion, natural and revealed—

\* Metam. Lib. 1. See the quotation, note 4, at the end of this Lecture.

## THE BEING OF A GOD.

If we have in any respect succeeded in overturning the two hypotheses which have now passed under review: if the world be not the production of chance, and if it be not eternal; it follows, that it must have been created—in order to which there must have been an infinite Architect. We have seen human reason led into labyrinths, from which it could not be extricated but by the friendly assistance of Revelation. To the eye of nature, all is obscurity. We have received decisive evidences from notorious facts, that when an investigation of these subjects has been attempted by men of the first talents, independently of this infallible guide, the mortifying and inevitable result has been, bewildered systems, trembling uncertainty, clashing, contradictory theories. “There is a path which no fowl knoweth, and which the vulture’s eye hath not seen: the lion’s whelps have not trodden it, nor hath the fierce lion passed by it.” This secret path is the operation of God, sought out by those who love him, and discovered only by the direction of his word, and the agency of his Spirit. Admit the being of a God, and all is clear and luminous. Every difficulty vanishes: for what cannot Omnipotence perform? “The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.” Can he deserve a milder name who holds his irrational creed? All nature proclaims His existence; and every feeling of the heart is responsive to its voice. The instant we begin to breathe, our connexion with God is commenced, and it is a connexion which cannot be dissolved for ever. All other unions are formed for a season only; time will waste them; death will destroy them: but this connexion looks death in the face, defies the injuries of time, and is commensurate with the ages of eternity. The moment we are capable of distinguishing between good and evil, our responsibility to God is begun—it commences with the dawn of reason, it looks forward to the judgment seat as its issue. At every period, and under every circumstance of human life, man still draws his existence from the “Fountain of life:” he may be cut off from society, but cannot be separated from God: he may renounce his fellow men, but never can burst the bonds of obligation by which he is held to his Maker, till he shall have acquired the power to extinguish that immaterial principle within him, which can never be subjected to decay or to dissolution. The last sigh which rends the bursting heart, terminates the correspondence between man and man; but strengthens the union between God and man. All the springs of enjoyment and of existence, are hidden in the Deity, and the fates of the human race are suspended in



the balances sustained by his unshaken arm. It is an object of the first magnitude to learn something of the Being, with whom we stand thus intimately and inseparably connected: who is light and warmth in the sun, softness in the breeze, power in the tempest, and the principle which pervades and animates, which regulates and sustains universal nature: but to deny his existence, is the madness of desperation, and the temerity of presumption: of all insanity, it is the worst; and of all ingratitude, it is the deepest. I see him rolling the planets in their orbits, controlling the furious elements, and stretching an irresistible sceptre over all things created. I see the globe suspended, and trembling in his presence; and the kingdoms of this world, absorbed in his empire, rising to distinction, or falling into irrecoverable desolation, according to the counsel of his will. My heart is not at ease. I am instructed, but not tranquilized. The infinity of God overwhelms me: his majesty humbles me: his inflexible justice and purity fill me with dismay: his power makes me afraid. It is this volume which first brings me acquainted with him as God, and afterwards as a friend: which represents him at once the Creator and the Redeemer of the human race; and while his attributes command my admiration, his mercy forbids my terror.

#### THE MOSAIC ACCOUNT OF THE CREATION

Remains to be briefly examined. He conducts us at once to this great Architect: "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." He represents the earth, after its creation, as a dark fluid, and an unformed chaos, or mass of matter, which, in six days, God reduced to order, and disposed in its present form. "And the earth was without form, and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." A modern critic\* has translated this passage, "*a vehement wind* oversweeping the surface of the waters." He founds his criticism upon the circumstance that the Hebrew language calls "thunder the voice of God; a great wind, his breath; the clouds his habitation, his chariot; the lightnings and the winds his ministers and messengers, &c.," and the possibility of rendering the words רוח אלהים either *the spirit of God*, or *the wind of God*, which he translates, *a mighty wind*. He produces various quotations from the scriptures, in which רוח must be rendered *wind*, and accumulates much criticism to prove that this is the primary sense of the original word, and of the terms usually employed in

\* Dr. Geddes.

translating it. An equal number of passages might easily be extracted from the sacred writers, in which רוּחַ would bear no other translation than *spirit*. Neither is it quite clear that רוּחַ signifies spirit only in a secondary and metaphorical sense: since, by their arrangement of explanatory terms, lexicographers seem divided upon the subject.\* Respecting אֱלֹהִים there can be but one opinion; and while our translators have preserved the literal rendering of the words, the translation proposed is confessedly justified only on its resemblance to some Hebrew phrases, the correspondence of which may or may not be admitted. This premised, I object farther to the rendering “a vehement wind,” because a very beautiful idea suggested by the literal reading of the words is lost in that, adopted by this critic: an idea which is so well expressed by our inimitable poet,† who was himself well versed in the original language of the sacred scriptures; and who, in his beautiful address to the Holy Spirit, says,

Thou from the first  
Wast present, and with mighty wings outspread,  
Dove-like, satst brooding on the vast abyss,  
And madst it pregnant.”

But it was impossible to maintain the simple translation, without admitting a doctrine, which this critic could not reconcile with the religious principles which he had adopted, the personality of the Holy Spirit;‡ and he therefore substituted one which did not clash with his sentiments; and on the same principle I prefer the common reading of our Bibles, because it accords with a system which appears to me both rational and scriptural, and which does include the personality of this Divine Agent; and because the words are by our translators literally rendered.

The first thing which appeared was *light*; the separation of which from darkness, was the work of the *first day*. “And God said, Let there be light; and there was light.” A more simple and more literal translation is, “Be light; and light was.” This very passage, in its connexion, has been marked by the elegant Longinus as a specimen of the *true sublime*.§ Nor did it escape the observation

\* Parkhurst gives, as its primary sense, *air in motion*; which corresponds with Dr. Geddes’ opinion: yet in his translation of Gen. i. 2, Parkhurst renders the words “*the spirit of the Aleim*.” Stockius gives, as the primary sense, *spiritus*, then *ventus*, &c. How little can be inferred from verbal criticism!

† Milton.

‡ Dr. Geddes has said, “those who have found in this passage the *person* of the HOLY GHOST, have been very little versed in the language of the East; and paid very little attention to the construction of the text.” So easy is it to deal in bold and unqualified assertions, and call them critical remarks. Surely he forgot that Milton was a Hebrew scholar of no common standard.

§ See note 5, at the end of this Lecture.

of the psalmist, who has well expressed it—"He spake, and it was done: he commanded, and it stood fast."

On the *second day*, God made an *expansion*: for so the Hebrew word רָקִיעַ which our translators have rendered "firmament," implies. It is derived from a root which signifies "out-stretching," and corresponds with that beautiful passage in Isaiah xl. 22. "It is he that *stretcheth out* the heavens as a curtain, and *spreadeth them out* as a tent to dwell in." It is the atmosphere which surrounds our globe, and which possesses density sufficient to sustain the waters above it. Its design, said Moses, is, "to divide the waters that are above this firmament"—or atmosphere, "from the waters that are under this expansion." This atmosphere is perpetually drawing up particles of water, till they accumulate, and become too heavy for the air to sustain them, and fall in showers of rain.

On the *third day*, the earth was drained, and the waters which before triumphed over its surface, were gathered into one grand receptacle. The land appeared, dry and fit for vegetation—received the name "Earth"—and produced, at the divine command, herbs, plants, trees, and all the endless varieties of the vegetable world, bearing their several seeds and fruits, according to their different kinds. The congregated waters he called "seas;" and drawing boundaries around them, he said, "Hitherto shall ye come, but no farther; and here shall your proud waves be stayed."

On the *fourth day*, the sun and moon were formed, and placed in the heavens to illuminate the earth, to distinguish between day and night, to divide, and to rule the revolving seasons of the year. "He made the stars also."

On the *fifth day*, were created fishes, and the swarming, multi-form inhabitants of the hoary deep, the fowls of heaven, and whatsoever flieth in the expansion above us: these all, were produced from the waters.

On the *sixth day*, were formed all terrestrial animals. Then also MAN, his last, best work, was "fashioned" from the "dust of the earth," and animated with "a living soul." Of man he formed the WOMAN, "to be a help meet for him."

"Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them." And "God rested from his work, and blessed the *seventh day*, and sanctified it," as a sabbath to the man and to his posterity.

Such is the Mosaic account of the creation, leading us up to God as the Creator and Disposer of all things; affording, beyond controversy, the most *rational* of the hypotheses presented to you;



and while it has left the way open for philosophic inquiries, it has not said any thing to gratify vain curiosity. We will attend to some few questions which have been often suggested from this representation of the beginning of all things, and conclude this Lecture, which has already been drawn out to a great length.

1. What was the light that made its appearance before the creation of the sun? In considering this question, which cannot be solved, and which is a matter of opinion altogether, various conjectures have been formed. Some have called it *elemental fire*. Some have supposed that it resembled the *shekinah*. A similar representation of it is made by our immortal bard:

“Let there be light, said God, and forthwith light  
Ethereal, first of things, quintessence pure,  
Sprung from the deep, and from her native east  
To journey through the airy gloom began,  
Spher’d in a radiant cloud, for yet the sun  
Was not; she in a cloudy tabernacle  
Sojourn’d the while.”\*

The critic, to whom we have before referred, supposes it to have been “an emanation of the same sun that still enlightens us; and which, although it had not yet appeared in its full glory, yet shed sufficient light through the dense atmosphere, to make the surface of the terraqueous globe visible.”† But as I feel inclined to give implicit credit to the Mosaic account, in its literal signification, which affirms that the sun and moon were made on the *fourth* day, and that “God commanded the light to shine out of darkness” on the *first*, I should rather imagine it to be the same particles of light *diffused*, which were afterwards *collected* into one body—the sun.‡ But of these various opinions the reader will judge for himself.

2. Does the Mosaic account oppose the present system of astronomy?

The language of the scriptures expresses simply the *appearance* of things, and neither sanctions nor opposes any system of philosophy. It has left the road of knowledge and research perfectly open; and neither forbids, nor adopts, the hypotheses of those who have explored the heavens, and with laborious and useful skill, de-

\* Par. Lost, Book VII. l. 243—249.

† Dr. Geddes' Crit. Rem. on Gen. C. I. ver. 3, vol. I. p. 14; quarto.

‡ I do not profess to offer this hypothesis as clear of objection and difficulty; but it is the best which occurs to me, and is allowable where every thing must be merely hypothetical. I am happy to find that this thought corresponds with one suggested in Mr. Fuller's commentary on Genesis; which, since the publication of the first edition of these Lectures, I have had the high gratification of reading.

veloped the laws by which the great system, of which the globe constitutes a part, seems to be regulated. When in common language we say—"The sun rises, and sets"—we do not mean to oppose the Newtonian, or any other astronomical system, but merely to express the *apparent* motion of this grand luminary. It is the beauty of the scriptures, that their language is perfectly conformable to our ideas, and therefore on most subjects falls within the grasp of our comprehension. And we ought to recollect that the design of this volume is not to develop the laws of nature, but to lead us along the narrow path which conducts to heaven: not to guide our feet through the orbits of planets, but to direct them to the throne of the invisible God.

3. Does the Mosaic account of the creation extend to the universe at large? This is an inquiry which cannot be decided. Some have concluded that the earth, the sun, and the moon, only belong to this history. Others restrict it to the solar system. Others extend it to the wide universe. The circumstances of the creation, as related by Moses, apply principally to the globe which we inhabit. The sun and the moon are mentioned as formed at the same period, and are evidently included in the account, because of their connexion with, and advantage to, the earth. But the phrase, "He made the stars, also"—seems to advert to the great universe; and may lead us to presume, that the creation of all things was effected at one and the same time.

4. In what sense are we to understand the term "six days"—as literal, or as allegorical? A critic,\* whom we have had occasion to mention more than once, boldly pronounces it "a beautiful mythos, or philosophical fiction."—Some of the ancient Christian Fathers esteemed it allegorical. I confess, however, that my reverence for this volume, makes me very reluctant to resolve into *allegory*, any thing which wears the appearance of *a fact* on its pages; much more so to venture to call it *a fable*. The following reasons determine me in concluding, that Moses designed it as a statement of facts, and that we ought to understand the phrase, "six days," in its literal sense:

The *seventh* day was instituted as a sabbath, that in it the man might rest from his labour, and more immediately serve his gracious Creator; and the reason, the only reason, assigned for it in the promulgation of the law was, that "in *six days* the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is; wherefore the Lord blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it."

This is the reason always produced, when the institution of the

\* Dr. Geddes.

Sabbath is at all named; and, in consequence of it, the *seventh* day was observed till the resurrection of Christ on the *first* day of the week: when, in perpetual remembrance of this great and glorious event, the *first* day became the Christian sabbath, and the *seventh* was laid aside.

The apostle who wrote to the Hebrews, quotes this passage from Genesis, in the second chapter, and at the fourth verse, of his epistle:—"And God did rest the *seventh* day from all his works." In his reasoning upon this passage, he makes no one remark, which discovers the least approximation to an allegorical interpretation; much less did he seem to regard it as "a beautiful mythos:" on the contrary, every thing which he says throughout that chapter, appears to ascertain very clearly, that he understood the phrase, "six days," used by Moses, in its literal sense.

5. Can any reason be assigned for the number of days fixed upon, and occupied in this great work? Certainly not. We dare not attempt to fathom the divine designs; nor is the Deity to be judged at a human tribunal. • Perhaps (for what can be offered but conjecture?) he carried on his work in progression, and chose six days for the performance of that, which he could have effected, had he been so disposed, in an instant, to show that he is a "God of order and not of confusion." It is thus, also, that he works in providence, and in grace. His plans are gradually developed; his wisdom gradually manifested; his will gradually accomplished; his designs gradually completed. And, possibly, he chose *only* six days, to demonstrate his unbounded power, that could perform so immense a work, in so short a space of time.

6. How could Moses be fitted to give an account of the creation? There can be no difficulty in answering this question, if it be allowed that he was *divinely inspired*: but we may account for his ability to record the circumstances of the creation in a way which will be more satisfactory to the wavering. It is no improbable conjecture, that in the earliest ages of the world, God communicated his will to pious individuals, and permitted them to transmit it to others by oral tradition: for in those days the longevity of man favoured this mode of conveyance. It will be admitted, that Adam could not be ignorant of the circumstances of the creation. With Adam, Methuselah lived two hundred and forty-three years: with Methuselah, Shem, the son of Noah, lived about ninety-seven years; with Shem, Isaac, the son of Abraham, lived fifty years; at the death of Isaac, Levi was forty years old; and Amram, at the decease of Levi, had attained his twenty-fifth year, according to the chronology of the history of Genesis. On this calculation no more



than *five* persons, Methuselah, Shem, Isaac, Levi, and Amram, were necessary to transmit this account, together with the knowledge and worship of God, from Adam to Moses.\* When the life of man was shortened, and the nations had become corrupt through idolatry, oral tradition was no longer a safe vehicle of conveyance; and God therefore communicated a revelation of his mind and will, which was committed to writing.

In retracing the outline of the preceding lecture, and contrasting the scriptural relation of the beginning of all things with other hypotheses; I trust, that the proposition, announced for elucidation this day, has been established: THAT THE MOSAIC ACCOUNT OF THE CREATION, IS THE ONLY RATIONAL ONE WHICH WE HAVE RECEIVED.

“Nevertheless, we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.”

## NOTES.

NOTE 1.—Hic ego non mirer esse quemquam, qui sibi persuadeat, corpora quædam solida atque individua vi et gravitate ferri, mundumque effici ornatisimum, et pulcherrimum ex eorum corporum concursione fortuitâ? Hoc qui existimat fieri potuisse, non intelligo, cur non idem putet, si innumerabiles unius et viginti formæ literarum vel aureæ, vel quales libet, aliquo conjiciantur, posse ex his in terram excussis annales Ennii, ut deinceps legi possint, effici: quod nescio an ne in uno quidem versu possit tantum valere fortuna. Isti autem quemadmodum asseverant, ex corpusculis non colore, non qualitate aliquâ, quam ποιότητα Græci vocant, non sensu præditis, sed concurrentibus temerè atque casu, mundum esse perfectum? vel innumerabiles potius in omni puncto temporis alios nasci, alios interire? Quod si mundum efficere potest concursus atomorum, cur porticum, cur templum, cur domum, cur urbem non potest? quæ sun minùs operosa, et multo quidem faciliora.

*Cic. de nat. deor. II. 37.*

Translated in page 52, of the preceding Lecture.

\* The hypothesis of the Egyptians. Κατὰ γὰρ τὴν ἐξ ἀρχῆς τῶν ὅλων σύστασιν, μίαν ἔχειν ἰδεαν ἡρανόν τε καὶ γῆν, μεμιγμένης αὐτῶν τῆς φύσεως· μετὰ δὲ ταυτα διασπῶνται τῶν σωμάτων ἀπ’ ἀλλήλων, τὸν μὲν κόσμον περιλαβεῖν ἅπασαν τὴν ἑρμηνείαν ἐν αὐτῷ σύνταξιν, τὸν δὲ ἀέρα κινήσεως τυχεῖν συνεχῆς. Καὶ τὸ μὲν πυρῶδες αὐτῷ πρὸς τῆς μετεωρολότου τόπῳ συνδράμειν· ἀναφερὲς ὕψους τῆς τοιαύτης φύσεως διὰ τὴν κρυφότητα· ἀφ’ ἧς αἰτίας τὸν μὲν ἡλιον καὶ τὸ λοιπὸν πλῆθος τῶν ἀστρον ἑναποληφθῆναι τῇ πάτῃ δίνῃ· τὸ δὲ ἰλυώδες καὶ θολερὸν μετὰ τῶν ὑγρῶν συγκρίσεως ἐπὶ ταυτὸ καταστῆναι, διὰ τὸ βῆρος, εἰλημενον δὲ ἐν ἑαυτῷ καὶ συσπρεφόμενον συνεχῶς, ἐκ μὲν τῶν ὑγρῶν τὴν θαλασσαν ἐκ δὲ τῶν σπέρμενιωτέρων ποιῆσαι τὴν γῆν πηλώδη καὶ πάντεως ἀπαλῆν. ταύτην δὲ τὸ μὲν πρῶτον τῇ περὶ τὸν ἡλιον πυρὸς καταλάμψαντος πῆξιν λαβεῖν, ἔπειτα διὰ τὴν θερμότητα ἀναζυμμένης τῆς ἐπιφανείας, συνοιδησαι τινα τῶν ὑγρῶν κατὰ πολλὰς τόπους, καὶ

\* See Note 6, at the end.

γενίσθαι περὶ αὐτὰ σπηδόνας ὑμέσι λεπτοῖς περιεχομένας. ὕπερ ἐστὶν ἐν τοῖς ἔλεσι καὶ τοῖς λιμένασιν τῶν τόπων ἐτι καὶ νῦν ὁράσθαι γινόμενον· ἐπειδὴν τῆς χώρας κατεφυγμένης ἄφνω διάπυρος ὁ ἀήρ γέννηται, μη λαβὼν τὴν μελαβόλην ἐκ τῆς κατ' ὀλίγον ζωογονομένην δὲ τῶν ὑγρῶν διὰ τὴν θερμασίας τὸν εἰρημένον τροπον, τὰς μὲν νύκτας λαμβάνειν αὐτίκα τὴν τροφὴν ἐκ τῆς πιπλῆστος ἀπο τῆ περιέχοντος ὀμίχλης, τὰς δὲ ἡμέρας ὑπὸ τῆ καύματος στέρεσθαι· τὸ δὲ ἔσχατον τῶν κυφορομένων τὴν τελείαν, αὐξήσιν λαβόντων, καὶ τὰ ὑμέναν διακαυθέντων τε καὶ περιβράχυντων, ἀναφυῆναι καὶ φανῆναι παντοδαπῆς τύπῃς ζῶων· τῶν δὲ τὰ μὲν πλείστης θερμασίας κεκοινωνηκότα πρὸς τὰς μετεώρας τύπῃς ἀπελθεῖν, γενόμενά πηλῆα, τὰ δὲ γεώδης ἂν δεχόμενα συγκρίσεως ἐν τῇ τῶν ἐρπετῶν καὶ τῶν ἄλλων τῶν ἐπιγείων τάξει καταριζμηθῆναι. τὰ δὲ φύσεως ὑγρὰς μάλιστα μετεωροφύτα πρὸς τοῦ ὁμογενεῖ τόπον συνδραμεῖν ὀνομασθέντα πλωτά. He goes on to illustrate this singularly obscure hypothesis, by the production of insects and reptiles from the mud of the Nile.

Diod. Sic. Lib. I.

Translated in page 53 of the preceding Lecture.

**NOTE 3.**—Among the ancient philosophers, various modifications of the hypothesis which supposes the eternity of the world, are to be found.

Ocellus Lucanus, who lived a short time before Plato, was one of the most ancient asserters of the world's eternity. A short treatise, bearing his name, yet remains, upon this subject. Ocell. Lucan. de Univ. p. 506. inter opusc. mythol. edit. per T. Gale, 1688. The arguments which he produces will not be considered as the most decisive and satisfactory that could be wished; for he asserts, that the world must be eternal, because its figure and motion are circular; and because it is impossible for any thing to arise out of nothing, or to fall again into nothing.

Aristotle maintained, that, not only the world, but mankind, and all species of animals, have existed from eternity, without any original production; and that the earth, with all its variations, and in all its parts, has ever been what it now is.

The later Platonists deduce their principal arguments in favour of the eternity of the world, from the eternity of God's decree for its creation, "and the indivisibility of the real duration of God." They maintain that God always existed; that his decree was eternal; and that there could not be a time in which it did not exist in the divine mind. Be it so: there remains still much perplexity in their reasoning; and, as it appears to me, much sophism in their deductions. There must be a difference between *ideal*, (if the expression be lawful,) and *actual* creation; and I do not see how it can be proved, that the *decree* was not anterior to the *accomplishment* of that decree.

Xenophanes and his followers supposed, that God and the world were one and the same thing; and of course held its eternity and immutability. This, again, has been denied by others: but there is so much obscurity in the statement which these philosophers have made of their own opinions, that if they did not mean this, it is difficult to decide what hypothesis they did intend to convey.

Of one or the other of these opinions respecting the eternity of the world, appear to have been Strato of Lampsacus, and Alexander the Epicurean, the contemporary of Plutarch.

Others supposed the *matter* of the world to be eternal, but not the *form* of it. These, in fact, held the eternity of the chaos, to which they attributed a certain motion arising from the action and reaction of the first four qualities, producing the earth by mere fortuitous fluctuations; and thus, this hypothesis resolves itself into the preceding one, viz. that the world itself was produced by chance.

The reader who may wish to see a large and more laborious statement of these several hypotheses, and others, not brought forward in this note, will find a full and satisfactory discussion of them in Anc. Univ. Hist. vol. I. p. 77—91; title, The Cosmogony. But in some later 8vo. editions, these statements are transferred to vol. XVIII. Appendix, p. 114—126. This note bears reference to p. 55 of the preceding Lecture.

NOTE 4.—Extracted from Ovid :

“Ante mare et tellus, et quod tegit omnia, cœlum,  
Unus erat toto naturæ vultus in orbe,  
Quem dixere chaos ; rudis, indigestaque moles ;  
Nec quicquam nisi pondus iners ; congestaque eodem  
Non bene junctarum discordia semina rerum.  
Nullus adhuc mundo præbebat lumina Titan ;  
Nec nova crescendo reparabat cornua Phœbe ;  
Nec circumfuso pendebat in aëre tellus  
Ponderibus librata suis : nec brachia longo  
Margine terrarum porrexerat Amphitrite.  
Quaque fuit tellus, illic et pontus et aër :  
Sic erat instabilis tellus, innabilis unda,  
Lucis egens aër. Nulli sua forma mauebat.  
Obstabatque aliis aliud : quia corpore in uno  
Frigida pugnabant calidis, humentia siccis,  
Mollia cum duris, sine pondere habentia pondus.  
Hanc Deus, et melior litem Natura deremit.  
Nam cœlo terras, et terris abscidit undas :  
Et liquidum spisso secrevit ab aëre cœlum.  
Quæ postquam evolvit, cæcoque exemit acervo,  
Dissociata locis concordia pace ligavit.  
Ignea convexi vis et sine pondere cœli  
Emicuit, summaque locum sibi legit in arce.  
Proximus est aër illi levitate, locoque :  
Densior his tellus : elementaque grandia traxit ;  
Et pressa est gravitate sui. Circumflus humor  
Ultima possedit, solidumque coërcuit orbem.

“Sic ubi dispositam, quisquis fuit ille Deorum,  
Congeriem secuit, sectamque in membra redegit ;  
Principio terram, ne non æqualis ab omni  
Parte forit, magni speciem glomeravit in orbis.  
Tum freta defundi, rapidisque tumescere ventis  
Jussit, et ambitæ circumdare littora terræ.  
Addidit et fontes, immensaque stagna lacusque ;  
Fluminaque obliquis cinxit declivia ripis :  
Quæ diversa locis partim sorbentur ab ipsa ;  
In mare perveniunt partim, campoque recepta  
Liberioris aquæ, pro ripis littora pulsan.  
Jussit et extendi campos, subsidere valles,  
Fronde tegi silvas, lapidosos surgere montes.  
Utque duæ dextra cœlum, totidemque sinistra  
Parte secant Zonæ, quinta est ardentior illis ;  
Sic onus inclusum numero distinxit eodem  
Cura Dei : totidemque plagæ tellure premuntur.  
Quarum quæ media est, non est habitabilis æstu :  
Nix tegit alta duas : totidem inter utramque locavit ;  
Temperiemque dedit, mista cum frigore flamma.  
Imminet his aër, qui, quanto est pondere terræ  
Pondus aquæ levius, tanto est onerosior igni.  
Illic et nebulas, illic consistere nubes  
Jussit, et humanas motura tonitrua mentes,  
Et cum fulminibus facientes frigora ventos.  
His quoque non passim mundi fabricator habendum  
Aëra permisit. Vix nunc obsistitur illis.  
Cum sua quisque regat diverso flamina tractu,  
Quin lanient mundum : tanta est discordia fratrum.  
“Eurus ad Auroram, Nabathæaque regna recessit,  
Persidaque, et radiis juga subdita matutinis.  
Vesper, et occiduo quæ littora sole tepescunt,  
Proxima sunt Zephyro : Scythiam septemque trione



Horriſer invaſit Boreas: contraria tellus  
 Nubibus aſſiduïs, pluviœque madescit ab Austro.  
 Hæc ſuper impoſuit liquidum et gravitate carentem  
 Æthera, nec quicquam terrenæ fæcis habentem.  
 Vix ita limitibus diſcreverat omnia certis,  
 Cum, quæ preſſa diu maſſa latuere ſub ipſa,  
 Sidera cœperunt toto effervescere cœlo.  
 Neu regio foret ulla ſuis animalibus orba,  
 Astra tenent cœleſte ſolum, formæque Deorum:  
 Ceſſerunt nitidis habitandæ piſcibus undæ:  
 Terra feras cepit, volucres agitabilis ær.

“Sanctius his animal mentisque capaciſ unum  
 Deerat adhuc, et quod dominari in cætera poſſet.  
 Natus homo eſt: ſive hunc divino ſemine fecit  
 Ille opifex rerum, mundi melioris origo:  
 Sive recens tellus ſeductaque nuper ab alto  
 Æthere, cognati retinebat ſemina cœli:  
 Quam ſatus Japeto, mixtam fluvialibus undis.  
 Finxit in effigiem moderantum cuncta Deorum.  
 Pronaque cum ſpectent animalia cætera terram,  
 Os homini ſublime dedit, cœlumque videre  
 Juſſit, et erectos ad ſidera tollere vultus.”

*Ovid. Metam. lib. I. l. 5—86.*

TRANSLATION BY DRYDEN.

“Before the ſeas, and this terreſtrial ball,  
 And heav’n’s high canopy, that covers all,  
 One was the face of nature; if a face,  
 Rather a rude and indigeſted maſs,  
 A lifeleſs lump, unfashion’d, and unfram’d,  
 Of jarring ſeeds; and juſtly Chaos nam’d.  
 No ſun was lighted up, the world to view;  
 No moon did yet her blunted horns renew;  
 Nor yet was earth ſuſpended in the ſky;  
 Nor poiſ’d, did on her own foundations lie;  
 Nor ſeas about the ſhores their arms had thrown;  
 But earth, and air, and water were in one.  
 Thus, air was void of light, and earth unſtable,  
 And waters dark abyſs unnavigable.  
 No certain form on any was impreſt;  
 All were confus’d, and each diſturb’d the reſt.  
 For hot and cold, were in one body fixt;  
 And ſoft with hard, and light with heavy mixt.  
 “But God, or Nature, while they thus contend,  
 To theſe intetine diſcords put an end;  
 Then earth from air, and ſeas from earth were driven,  
 And groſſer air ſunk from ethereal heaven.  
 Thus, diſembroil’d they take their proper place;  
 The next of kin, contiguous embrace;  
 And foes are ſunder’d by a larger ſpace.  
 The foes of fire aſcended firſt on high,  
 And took its dwelling in the vaulted ſky:  
 Then air ſucceeds, in lightneſs next to fire;  
 Whoſe atoms from unactive earth retire.  
 Earth ſinks beneath, and draws a num’rous throng  
 Of pond’rous, thick, unwieldy ſeeds along.  
 About her coaſts, unruly waters rear;  
 And, riſing on a ridge, inſult the ſhore.  
 “Thus, when the God, whatever God was he,  
 Had form’d the whole, and made the parts agree,

That no unequal portions might be found,  
 He moulded earth into a spacious round:  
 Then, with a breath, he gave the winds to blow:  
 And bade the congregated waters flow.  
 He adds the running springs, and standing lakes;  
 And bounding banks for winding rivers makes.  
 Some part in earth are swallow'd up, the most  
 In ample oceans disembogu'd, are lost.  
 He shades the woods, the valleys he restrains  
 With rocky mountains, and extends the plains.

"And as five zones th' ethereal regions bind,  
 Five, correspondent, are to earth assign'd:  
 The sun with rays, directly darting down,  
 Fires all beneath, and fries the middle zone:  
 The two beneath the distant poles, complain  
 Of endless winter, and perpetual rain.  
 Betwixt th' extremes, two happier climates hold  
 The temper that partakes of hot, and cold.  
 The fields of liquid air, enclosing all,  
 Surround the compass of this earthly ball:  
 The lighter parts lie next the fires above;  
 The grosser near the wat'ry surface move:  
 Thick clouds are spread, and storms engender there,  
 And thunder's voice, which wretched mortals fear,  
 And winds that on their wings cold winter bear.  
 Nor were those blust'ring brethren left at large,  
 On seas, and shores, their fury to discharge:  
 Bound as they are, and circumscrib'd in place,  
 They rend the world, resistless as they pass;  
 And mighty marks of mischief leave behind;  
 Such is the rage of their tempestuous kind.

"First, Eurus to the rising morn is sent,  
 (The regions of the balmy continent;)  
 And eastern realms, where early Persians run,  
 To greet the blest appearance of the sun.  
 Westward the wanton Zephyr wings his flight;  
 Pleas'd with the remnants of departing light.  
 Fierce Boreas, with his offspring, issues forth  
 T' invade the frozen wagon of the north;  
 While frowning Auster seeks the southern sphere,  
 And rots in endless rain, th' unwholesome year.

"High o'er the clouds, and empty realms of wind,  
 The God a clearer space for heav'n design'd;  
 Where fields of light, and liquid ether flow,  
 Purg'd from the pond'rous dregs of earth below,

"Scarce had the Power distinguish'd these, when straight  
 The stars, no longer overlaid with weight,  
 Exert their heads, from underneath the mass;  
 And upward shoot, and kindle as they pass,  
 And with diffusive light adorn their heavenly place.  
 Then, every void of nature to supply,  
 With forms of gods he fills the vacant sky:  
 New herds of beasts, he sends the plains to share:  
 New colonies of birds to people air:  
 And to their cozy beds, the finny fish repair.

"A creature of a more exalted kind  
 Was wanting yet, and then was man design'd:  
 Conscious of thought, of more capacious breast,  
 For empire form'd, and fit to rule the rest:  
 Whether with particles of heavenly fire  
 The God of nature did his soul inspire,

Or earth, but new-divided from the sky,  
 And, pliant, still retain'd th' ethereal energy:  
 Which wise Prometheus\* temper'd into paste,  
 And mix'd with living streams the godlike image cast.  
 Thus, while the mute creation downwards bend  
 Their sight, and to their earthy mother tend,  
 Man looks aloft; and with erected eyes  
 Beholds his own hereditary skies.  
 From such rude principles our form began;  
 And earth was metamorphos'd into man."

*Garth's Ovid. Vol. I. p. 5—9.*

This extract from Ovid refers to page 62, of the preceding Lecture.

NOTE 5.—Testimony to the majesty of the scriptures from Longinus in his treatise on the sublime. He had been saying that, "Those who speak of God, ought to be careful to represent him as great, and pure, and without alloy:" He adds, *Ταύτη καὶ ὁ τῶν Ἰσραηλίων θεομιθέτης, εἰς ὁ τυχῶν ἀνὴρ, ἐπειδὴ τὴν τε θεῖα δύναμιν κατὰ τὴν ἀξίαν ἐχώρησε, κάξέφρησεν, εὐθύς ἐν τῇ εἰσβολῇ γράψας τῶν νόμων, "Εἶπεν ὁ Θεός," φησὶ τί; "γενέσθω φῶς, καὶ ἐγένετο γενέσθω γῆ, καὶ ἐγενετώ."* Thus the legislator of the Jews, a man of no common genius, conceived and spake justly of the power of Deity, when in the very beginning of his laws, he writes—"God said," (said he,) What? "Be light, and it was: Be earth, and it was so."

*Dion. Long. de Sublim. Sec. IX. p. 50. Pearce's Edit.*

Longinus lived in the time of Aurelian the emperor, and was a favourite of Zenobia, queen of the Palmyrians. His treatise "on the sublime," from which the above extract is taken, is, in itself, a master-piece of eloquence.

This extract refers to page 64, of the preceding Lecture.

NOTE 6.—I had stated, in the first edition of these Lectures, that only *three* persons, Methuselah, Shem, and Jacob, were necessary to transmit the account of the Creation from Adam to the time when the Israelites went down into Egypt. A very kind communication from a most respectable gentleman of Camberwell, induced me to review this calculation, which had been adopted upon the authority of Dr. Taylor, in his *Scheme of Scripture Divinity*; (preserved in Bishop Watson's Theol. Tracts, vol. I. p. 181,) and having discovered a glaring error in the Doctor's calculation respecting Jacob, as well as carefully examined the calculations submitted to me by my liberal and enlightened critic, I have adopted his statement in the present edition from a persuasion of its accuracy, and beg leave to offer him my most grateful acknowledgments for his obliging communication. Had those journals of professed criticism, which have laboured with so much zeal to discover and expose every trifling inaccuracy in this volume, been as well-informed as they are fastidious, they might, by pointing out this, and some other real and important errors, which I have detected since the publication of the first edition of this work, have rendered me an essential service; they would, in so doing, have honoured the character which they have assumed, and have been intitled to my warmest gratitude: as it is, they have but exposed the bitterness of their own spirit—and taught me in what estimation to hold their criticisms.—See p. 69, of the preceding Lecture.

\* "Japetus"—or Japhet.



## LECTURE III.

## THE DELUGE.

## GEN. VII. 11—24.

In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights. In the self-same day entered Noah, and Shem, and Ham, and Japheth, the sons of Noah, and Noah's wife, and the three wives of his sons with them, into the ark: They, and every beast after his kind, and all the cattle after their kind, and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind, and every fowl after his kind, every bird of every sort. And they went in unto Noah into the ark, two and two of all flesh, wherein is the breath of life. And they that went in, went in male and female of all flesh, as God had commanded him: and the Lord shut him in. And the flood was forty days upon the earth; and the waters increased, and bare up the ark; and it was lift up above the earth. And the waters prevailed, and were increased greatly upon the earth: and the ark went upon the face of the waters. And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth: and all the high hills, that were under the whole heaven, were covered. Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered. And all flesh died, that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man. All in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died. And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth: and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark. And the waters prevailed upon the earth, a hundred and fifty days.

## 2 PET. III. 5—7.

For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water. Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished. But the heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men.

It is impossible to read the history of empires which once gave laws to the world, to trace the sources of their gradual decay, and to contemplate them in ruins, without emotions of pity and regret. The man who visits the spot where ancient imperial Rome stood, and held through many successive ages a boundless dominion over the commotions of the world, and finds only the sad monuments of decayed greatness, must possess feelings peculiar to himself, if no

melancholy sensations arise in his heart to accord with the desolations without. Where her awful senate convened, time strides over the ruin, and writes on the broken triumphal arch, "The glory is departed." The traveller, as he sits upon a prostrate pillar, hears no sound but the passing wind, as it sighs along the weed-encompassed portico of some mouldering temple. The amphitheatre, once crowded with the masters of the globe, now shelters the bat, and the serpent; and affords an asylum to the owl from the glare of noonday. Who, that has a heart to feel, can wander among the crumbling vestiges of ancient grandeur, without dropping a tear over the scene of desolation, and exclaiming, "So sets the sun of earthly majesty, "to rise no more for ever?"

But the destruction which now demands our attention, is of much wider extent, and of infinitely greater magnitude. Not a city, nor an empire, but a world in ruins; is the subject of contemplation. A new and awful view of Deity is conveyed to the mind. We behold him, not descending in mercy, wafted on the wings of angels, amid the full chorus of heaven, to spread his golden compasses over the vast abyss, and to describe the circle of the earth; calling universal nature from discord and chaos; lending radiance to the sun, and immensity to the spheres; impressing his image upon man; constituting him lord of the creation; placing the diadem of glory upon his head, and the sceptre of authority in his hand: but we contemplate the offended Majesty of Heaven, arrayed in vengeance; terrible in fury; clothed in all the thunder of his power; arming the elements against his adversaries; and opening the dreadful artillery of his wrath upon a guilty world.

When God completed the creation, he beheld in the harmony and magnificence of his work the perfect transcript of his own vast design, and pronounced the whole, and all its several parts, "very good." By an early act of disobedience, man broke the law of his Maker; and not only cancelled the bond of his own happiness, but blotted the hand-writing of Deity in the volume of nature. The fall of man, *as a point of doctrine*, comes not within the department of this course of Lectures: it is our business simply to insist upon it as *a fact* recorded in the scriptures, which ten thousand different and fatal effects produced by it tend to establish. To this fact, as a source, must be traced up every calamity which wrings a tear from the eye, every pang which extorts a groan from the heart, and every stroke of mortality which descends upon our connexions. Sin having found its way into the world, was followed by death, and a long train of attendant miseries. The yawning tomb presented itself to the man at the end of this valley of tears, and

the grave was the termination of his fondest hopes: to the earliest race of men, as to us, it was the limit to the longest period of existence. A life of "nine hundred sixty and nine years," like a summer's day, had its dawn, its morning, its meridian, its decline: it yielded to the lengthening shadows of the evening; and gradually sunk into the gloom of a midnight silent and impenetrable.

Who will be able to set boundaries to vice? When the flood-gates are once opened, who shall presume to check the torrent, or attempt to stay the impetuosity of the rushing waters? The rivulet, increased in its course by the constant accession of innumerable tributary streams, swells into a flood, and rolls a deep, silent, resistless river, which is at length lost in the bosom of the ocean. Such was the progression of iniquity. Small in its beginning, it rapidly augmented, till it had covered the whole earth. Man added sin to sin, till the measure of his transgression was full, and the long-slumbering wrath of Heaven burst over his unsheltered head. He who can think lightly of sin, and wantonly or deliberately walk in the paths of temptation, resembles a man who suffers his little bark to approach the circumference of a whirl-pool: at first the vessel glides on in gentle, wide, and almost imperceptible, circumvolutions: continually, however, approaching the centre, and bearing the wretch thither with increased velocity, till, in defiance of effort, the violence of the current prevails, and all is engulfed in the illimitable abyss.

Before the subject, which is to occupy our present attention, is considered at large, the intermediate history, which demands elucidation, ought to pass in review before us. One of the most extraordinary circumstances, attending the antediluvian history, is the astonishing duration of human life in those days, contrasted with the brevity of our own. Some have conjectured, that the years ascribed to these first men, were lunar, and not solar. To consider them as months, would release us from one difficulty, but it must involve us in another still more considerable. Among other objections, the following may be deemed unanswerable:—First, this calculation reduces their lives to a shorter period than our own. Secondly, some of them must have been fathers under, or about, six years of age. Thirdly, it contracts the interval between the creation and the deluge, to considerably less than two hundred years, even admitting the larger calculation of the Septuagint.\*

The account of this longevity, however, is not restricted to the

\* The common calculation settles the date of the flood at 1656 years after the creation: but the Septuagint places it in the year of the world 2262.



Mosaic history; but is corroborated by various ancient writers. Upon this subject, Josephus enumerates the testimonies of Manetho, Berosus, Mochus, Hestæus, Jerome the Egyptian; the writers of the Phenician antiquities, Hesiod, Hecataeus, Hellanicus, Acusilaus, Ephorus, and Nicholas, who generally agreed that, "the ancients lived a *thousand* "years."<sup>\*</sup>

We have accumulated these names, to show that these men either were in possession of traditions relating to this fact, upon which their assertions are founded; or that they borrowed them from Moses: and in either case our purpose is answered. For if they received them from prevalent traditions, it will be granted that these traditions had originally some foundation in fact; and they correspond with the sacred history. But if they borrowed them from Moses, two points are gained on our part. It is proved, on this principle, that such a man as Moses did really exist; that his writings were then extant; that they were in substance what they now are; and that they bear an antiquity more remote than these, which are allowed to be the most ancient of the heathen writers. It is proved farther, that his history was highly esteemed; and that it was supposed, by these writers, to contain facts. Whether they drew from Moses, or from tradition; and whether their testimony sprang from his narration, or from any other source, either way, the Mosaic account of these early ages, is corroborated by the oldest fragments of antiquity.

Various inquiries have been agitated respecting the principles on which we may reasonably account for this longevity; and it will be readily granted that the answers attempted are founded upon opinion only. Some have imputed it to the temperance of the antediluvians, and their simplicity of diet. Others have imagined that it arose from the superior excellence of their fruits, or some peculiar salubrity in the herbs of those days. A third class of philosophers have stated, that it proceeded from the strength of their *stamina*, or first principles of bodily constitution; that they had an organization more vigorous, and a frame more robust. This has been admitted, by some, to be a concurrent, but not a sole and adequate cause: since Shem, who was born before the flood, and, it is to be presumed, had, therefore, all the strength of an antediluvian constitution, fell short of the age of his fathers three hundred years. In addition, therefore, to natural bodily energy, it is probable that there was a temperature of the air, and an adaptation of the general state of the earth, to the production of this extraordinary longevity, which temperature was destroyed by the Deluge. But there is

\* See note 1, at the end of this Lecture.

no way of completely answering such inquiries, but by referring immediately to the will and power of Him, who is "wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working."

Moses relates also a union which took place between the family of Seth and the descendants of Cain; for so we interpret the phrase, "sons of God," and "daughters of men." It is generally believed that the sons of Seth had, till that time, preserved the worship of God, with correspondent purity of life, while it is agreed that the posterity of Cain were given over to "vile affections;" and on this supposition the fitness of the terms used, and the propriety of their application to the respective parties, will not be disputed. This fatal union totally destroyed the principles of holiness which a part of the human race had preserved from extinction; and when from this commerce sprang "mighty men," and "men of renown, the" whole "earth was" quickly "filled with violence." "There were," also, "giants in the earth, in those days." We understand the term literally, as implying, not merely men of violence, but of extraordinary bulk and stature. And why should this account be disputed, when confirmed by so many ancient writers? Pausanias, Philostratus, Pliny, and others, speak decidedly of the remains of gigantic bodies discovered in their days.\* "Upon the rending of a mountain in Crete, by an earthquake," says this last-mentioned natural historian, "there was found standing upright a gigantic body." Josephus speaks of bones seen in his days, of a magnitude that almost exceeded credibility. Even Homer, who wrote three thousand years ago, speaks, from tradition, that, in his "degenerate days," the human frame was dwindled down into half its size. It is not necessary to contend, nor is it intimated in the Mosaic account, that the bodies of men in general were of such prodigious dimensions: all that we wish to prove is, that "there *were*" giants in those days;" that there were, probably, *many* of them; and that this scriptural revelation is abundantly confirmed by profane historians.

At this time, fraud and injustice, rapine and violence, according to the sacred writer, extended themselves over the face of the earth. Is he singular in this declaration? Who, that has read the records of antiquity, may not gather a confirmation of his statement, from their deposition? Who, that is conversant with the fables of the

\* See Doddridge's Lectures, Part VI. Prop. cix. &c. p. 293, § 5, 4to. edit. Grotius de Verit. Relig. Christ. § xvi. notes. Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. v. c. 16. Consult also Dr. Geddes' Criticism on Gen. vi., in which he espouses an opposite opinion from that stated above: but, as it appears to the writer of these Lectures, one, which reflects less credit upon the veracity of Moses, as an historian; and destroys his claim to inspiration.

heathen poets, may not extract this truth from the cumbrous mass of fiction by which it is overwhelmed. A golden age, gradually degenerating into an iron one, has been sung by a thousand bards, whose silent harps have long since mouldered away with the ashes of their masters! Which of the ancient poets did not celebrate these times? or deplore their extinction? Catullus\* has stated this fact nearly in the terms used by Moses; and has amplified his expressions so largely, as to present almost a commentary upon the sixth chapter of Genesis. Ovid† tells the same tale; and represents his injured justice driven from men by the hand of rapacity, and seeking shelter in her native heavens!

Amidst this general depravity, was issued a solemn declaration from heaven; "My spirit shall not always strive with man." Yet was not sudden and silent destruction, commissioned to destroy the guilty. The patience and pity of God, were manifested even in his rising indignation. Enoch and Noah were "preachers of righteousness;" and a space of one hundred and twenty years was allotted to the offenders for repentance. Enoch, in the mean time, was received into heaven "without tasting of death;" and Noah having closed his unavailing ministry, entered into the ark, constructed according to the pattern given by God himself, with his family, and the pairs of all living animals. For the world—they "were eating and drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage, and knew not till the flood came and swept them all away!"

The subject of the present Lecture is, *THE DELUGE*; and the arrangement which we propose is—To establish the fact: to state the hypotheses of some writers who have attempted to account for it: to meet some objections raised against it: and to suggest an improvement of it. We shall endeavour,

### 1. TO ESTABLISH THE FACT.

The evidence upon which we would fix your attention, is simply:—The general and concurrent consent of nations; and the existence of vast quantities of marine productions upon the tops of mountains, and under the surface of the ground to considerable depths, over the whole earth, and at all distances from the sea.

\* In his *Epithalamium* of Peleus and Thetis: see note 2, at the end of this Lecture.

† *Victa jacet pietas; et virgo cæde madentes  
Ultima cælestium terras Astrea reliquit.*

*Ovid's Meta. I.*

Faith flies! and piety in exile mourns;  
And justice, here oppress'd, to heav'n returns!



## 1. THE GENERAL AND CONCURRENT CONSENT OF NATIONS.—

This is an argument in favour of a universal deluge, which has never been fairly met: nor, indeed, does it appear capable of satisfactory solution on any principle but the admission of the fact. It has been most forcibly maintained, that antiquity is full of testimonies relating to this singular event; that the whole heathen mythology sprang from traditions of the deluge; and that Prometheus, Deucalion, Atlas, Theuth, Zuth, Xuthus, Inachus, Osiris, Dagon, and others were all different names by which Noah was intended.\* The traditions of the destruction of the globe, partially or entirely, by waters, are found among the fragments of the most ancient heathen writers; pervade India; live among the wandering tribes of America; and meet the inquirer in the distant islands of the Pacific Ocean. Eusebius has preserved a passage from Abydenus' history of Assyria, to the following effect:

"After these, reigned many others, and then Seisithrus: to whom Saturn foretold, that there should fall a prodigious flood of rain on the fifteenth day of the month Decius; and commanded him to deposite all his writings in Heliopolis, a city of the Sipparians. Having obeyed this injunction, Seisithrus, without delay, sailed into Armenia, and found the prediction of the god realized. On the third day, after the waters were abated, he sent out birds, that he might ascertain whether the earth had yet appeared through the flood. But these, finding only a boundless sea, and having no resting place, returned to Seisithrus. In the same manner did others. And again he sent the third time: for they had returned to him, having their wings polluted with mud. Then the gods translated him from among men; and his ship came into Armenia, the wood of which there is used as a charm."† He refers also to the dove of Noah, when speaking of the sagacity of animals, he says, "Deucalion's dove, sent from the ark, upon her return, brought a sure indication, that the tempests had yielded to tranquillity."‡

Concerning Berosus' history of Chaldea, Josephus, in his first book against Appion, thus writes: "This Berosus, treading in the

\* The ingenious writer, who has, with equal ability and success, collected all the testimonies of antiquity, and unveiled the mysteries concealed under their fables, is Mr. Bryant, in his *System of Mythology*. Those who wish to find an epitome of his reasoning, and some considerable extracts from his work, may be gratified by consulting the *Encyclopædia Britannica*—Article *Deluge*: but the original work, republished in 1807, in six volumes octavo, is that which will amply repay the scholar, for all the time and labour he may expend in carefully perusing it.

† Euseb. *Præp. lib. ix. cap. 12*. See note 3, at the end of this Lecture.

‡ Δευκαλιωνι φασι περισελάν ἐκ της λάβνακος ἀφικεμένην διλαμα γινέσθαι, χιμῶνος μὲν ἴσα πάλιν ἐνδυομένην, εὐδίας δὲ ἀποπλῆσσαν. *Libro, Terrestria an Aquatica Animantia plus habeant solertiae.*

steps of the most ancient writers, has recorded the same facts as Moses, in relation to the deluge—the destruction of mankind by it—the ark in which Noah, the father of our race, was preserved—and its resting upon the tops of the Armenian mountains.” After the relation to which Josephus alludes, Berosus adds, “It is reported that part of the ship now remains in Armenia, on the Gordyæan mountains; and that some bring thence pitch, which they use as a charm.”\*

Lucian speaks of a very remote history of the ark, laid up in Hierapolis of Syria; and the account which, according to him, the Greeks gave of the deluge, is as follows: “That the first race of men were self-willed, perpetrating many crimes, regardless of oaths, inhospitable, uncharitable; for which cause, great calamities fell upon them. For suddenly the earth threw out much water: a deluge of rain fell from heaven: rivers overflowed exceedingly; and the sea itself overspread the globe to that degree, that all things were overwhelmed by the water, and the whole of mankind perished. Deucalion alone remained, the source of another generation, on account of his prudence and piety. He was preserved thus: In a great ark, which he had prepared, he placed his wives and his children, and entered also himself. After them went in bears, and horses, and lions, and serpents, and all other living creatures upon the face of the earth, by pairs. He received all these animals, which had no power to injure him, but were extremely familiar, being overruled by divine influence. These all floated together, in the same ark, so long as the waters were upon the earth.”†

We have already remarked, that the same person was intended by a diversity of names; and Grotius says, that “Seisithrus, Ogyges, and Deucalion, are all names signifying, in other languages, the same as Noah does in the Hebrew, the language in which Moses wrote.”‡ Now, it is a fact well known, that the ancient writers, in copying from any original, did not give in their translation the names used in that original: but changed them for some other that had *the same meaning* in the language into which they translated them, as the original names had in that, from which they transcribed. For instance, Alexander the historian, writing concerning Isaac in Greek, does not adhere to the original name, but calls

\* Josephus Contr. Appion, primo; et Antiq. Hist. lib. i. cap. 4. See note 4, at the end of this Lecture. The Gordyæan mountains are the same with those which Moses calls Ararath. See Grotius de Verit. Relig. Christ. § 16, notes.

† Lucian, libro de Deâ Syriâ et de templo vetustissimo quod erat Hierapoli.

‡ Grotius de Verit. Relig. Christ. § 16—notes: where also these extracts from Lucian and others, are quoted at length, with many similar ones. For both the above quotations, see note 5, at the end of this Lecture.

him Telota (Τέλωτα,) or "Laughter;" which is the interpretation of the Hebrew name Isaac; and was given him by Sarah in remembrance of some circumstances relating to his birth. Thus, by the different names used in the accounts which different nations give of the deluge, the same person is intended—and *that* person is Noah. Diodorus says, it is the tradition of the Egyptians, that "Deucalion's was the universal deluge." Plato corroborates this testimony by saying, that "a certain Egyptian priest, related to Solon, out of their sacred books, the history of the universal deluge; which took place long before the partial inundations known to the Grecians." There is another remarkable coincidence and correspondence with the Mosaic account: the very day fixed by Moses as the beginning of the deluge, agrees exactly with the day in which, Plutarch tells us, Osiris went into the ark, the seventeenth of Athyr; which is the second month after the autumnal equinox, the sun then passing through Scorpio.—It is thus that the evidence of the universal deluge, in this particular branch of it, corresponds with that of the creation: that it is equally the subject of tradition; and *that* tradition, varying a little in circumstance, is equally prevalent over the face of the whole earth. This fact is farther proved by,

2. THE EXISTENCE OF VAST QUANTITIES OF MARINE PRODUCTIONS UPON THE TOPS OF MOUNTAINS, AND UNDER THE SURFACE OF THE GROUND, TO CONSIDERABLE DEPTHS, OVER THE WHOLE EARTH, AND AT ALL DISTANCES FROM THE SEA.—The earthquake that shakes the towering palace, and the proud battlements of the city, to the ground, rends the bosom of the earth, and discloses the shells and teeth of fish—the bones of animals—entire or partial vegetables—evidently transported thither from their respective elements, by some grand and universal commotion, affecting at one and the same time, the sea and the dry land, and destroying the limits of their mutual separation. This was considered as a decisive argument till the recent hypotheses of some modern philosophers have furnished an *evasion* of its force.\* It has been proved that volcanoes are capable of forming mountains of very considerable magnitude: that the fire of them lies deep, and often below the waters of the ocean itself. On this account, marine substances may be found at all depths in these volcanic mountains, and yet afford no proof of a deluge. There would be some weight in this argument if these marine substances were found only in the neighbourhood of volcanoes; but with all its plausibility, it is incapable of universal application. It may be thought to account for marine substances lying

\* Sir William Hamilton.



deep in volcanic mountains, or lands stretching along the borders of the ocean, and liable to volcanic irruptions: but it will furnish no satisfactory reason for their existence in an inland country, free from volcanoes, and hundreds of miles distant from the sea. There are also appearances of desolation presented in nature, which cannot be accounted for, even on the supposition of earthquakes; or be deemed the consequence of any convulsion, less powerful than that of a universal deluge.

Another hypothesis is levelled against the system which we espouse. Some philosophers have supposed, that a perfect transposition of the order of things has taken place: that what *is* land *was* once sea; and that where the ocean rolls his proud waves, the earth presented her fair and cultivated face.\* If this, indeed, was the case, as the sea is liable to the same volcanic irruptions, the existence of marine productions, on every part of the globe, may be accounted for, without the admission of a universal deluge: since we may easily imagine, that when the waters retreated, they left some of their spoils, deeply implanted, behind. The observations which we have made, and are capable of making, in the contracted sphere of our personal knowledge—and the changes which are effected on the face of nature, in the narrow circle of the few years allotted to us—may not, perhaps, be deemed any thing: but those of ages and generations long since rolled by, and which are recorded on the faithful page of impartial history, ought to be duly appreciated. The inroads which the sea has made upon the land, recorded by those who have measured and watched its boundaries, in the remembrance of our fathers, have been comparatively inconsiderable: nor will any authentic history of the most remote periods, furnish us with matters of fact to justify, or even to countenance, an hypothesis so extravagant. Every instance which can be produced of the ground gained by the waves upon the shores of the globe, is so trifling, and the conquest was so slowly acquired, that the system proposed must suppose an antiquity of the world, very little different, as it respects the objections that lie against it, from the hypothesis which maintains its eternity; the answer to which fell under the department of the preceding Lecture. This wild opinion, moreover, seems to suppose islands only the tops of mountains: but over the whole face of our present continents is there no such mountain, or chain of mountains, in shape or extent, as our native country—whose hoary cliffs stretch their barriers wide and firm, frowning defiance equally upon the waves which assault her

\* Buffon.

shores, and the power of nations who insult her majesty? On the whole, we think, that only on the principle of a universal deluge can the existence of marine productions found scattered wide, and buried deep, over the whole globe, be accounted for: since the theory which supposes the retreat of the ocean from our present earth, and that which rather suggests, than asserts, that all dry land was thrown up from the bottom of the sea, by volcanic, subterraneous fires, are equally preposterous and irrational. Now, the waters were long enough upon the earth, according to the Mosaic account, for shell-fish to breed on land, and to increase from spawn to their full size; the action of the waters upon the earth would greatly soften it; and the spoils of the deep, at, and before, the retreat of the waters, would be deeply absorbed, and covered by the perforated and broken soil. There appears to us to be but one way of determining upon this point: the Mosaic history is so express, that either a universal deluge must be admitted, or the whole narration rejected. Had the deluge been only partial, some winged animals might have made their escape from it, since it gradually and progressively extended; and time was consequently afforded them for flight from the encroaching waters: but it is said, "all flesh died, that moved upon the earth, both of fowl and of cattle." And if the waters were restricted to only a portion of the earth, a constant miraculous power must have been exerted to keep them at an elevation so immense, as to cover all the high hills of the immersed part, from running off into the sea, supposing the sea to have preserved its usual level. Nor is it easily ascertained, how far the human race had spread themselves over the face of the earth, or the degree in which man had multiplied. When, therefore, we speak of the Deluge, we mean a universal flood; and mean to distinguish it from the partial inundations which from time to time have laid waste particular countries; and which, in more remote ages, were preserved in remembrance by the heathen poets.

II. We pass on to present you with a selection of a few, from the innumerable HYPOTHESES BY WHICH INGENIOUS WRITERS HAVE ATTEMPTED TO ACCOUNT FOR IT.

To all who have written upon this subject, the grand difficulty appears to have been, the prodigious quantity of waters requisite to such a deluge as that described by Moses. There are two sources whence the sacred historian deduces them: "The fountains of the great deep were broken up; and the windows of heaven were opened." The proportion of water necessary to constitute a universal deluge, has been by some estimated at *eight* oceans;

while others\* have computed it at not less than *twenty two*. The inquiry then is, What did Moses intend by "the fountains of the deep?" and are these, united with the "windows of heaven," sufficient to cause an inundation so immense?

1. Dr. BURNET† supposes the world to have been perfectly round, without mountains or any irregularity of surface, incrusting a globe of waters, which he calls the central abyss. He imagines that this exterior covering of earth, was broken at the time of the deluge, and sunk down beneath the prevailing waters. This system, it is necessary to observe, opposes the narrative of Moses, which asserts, that "all the *high hills* were covered."

2. Mr. WHISTON‡ imputes the whole to the interposition and agency of a comet; descending in the plane of the ecliptic towards the sun, and passing just before the earth on the first day of the deluge. He also concludes that there is an abyss of waters under the surface of the earth; and supposes the influence of this body would produce a strong tide on the waters both above and under the earth, which would increase in proportion to the nearness of its approach. Those, particularly, encircled within the globe, would form an elliptical figure so much larger than their former spherical one, that, unable to oppose a resistance equal to its pressure, the surface of the earth would burst; which he asserts is the meaning of the phrase, "The fountains of the great deep were broken up." He farther supposes, that, in its descent, the comet involved the earth in its atmosphere and tail for a considerable time; and the quantity of water left behind, when rarefied by the sun, would descend in violent rains; which he imagines is intended by the opening of "the windows of heaven." The succeeding heavy rains, recorded by Moses, enduring a hundred and fifty days, he attributes to a second similar immersion, on its return. In withdrawing these destructive waters from the face of the ruined world, he supposes a vehement wind to have arisen, which dried up a part, forced more through the clefts out of which they issued, and deposited the remainder in the bed of the ocean; which he imagines not to have existed before. The uncertainty of every calculation respecting comets, and the possibility that their tails and atmospheres are streams of electric fluid, and not aqueous vapours, render this ingenious theory very questionable.

3. M. DE LA PRYME,§ concludes that the antediluvian world resembled the present one: but that the deluge was effected by vio-

\* Dr. Keil.

† Telluris Theoria Sacra.

‡ New Theory of the Earth: also, The Cause of the Deluge demonstrated.

§ See Encyclopædia Britannica—article *Deluge*.



lent earthquakes, breaking up its whole surface—absorbing continents, islands, and the whole of the then dry land, correspondent portions of earth emerging from the antediluvian sea. Three objections rise against this theory: 1. The Mosaic history says nothing of earthquakes. 2. Amid commotions so terrible as those which must necessarily be caused by the sinking of the earth, the ark itself could not have been preserved without miracle. 3. Earthquakes operate suddenly and violently: but the Bible affirms that the flood came on gradually, *although* irresistibly.

4. The eloquent and ingenious ST. PIERRE,\* imagines that the deluge may be accounted for on the supposition, that on the year in which this great event took place, the action of the vertical sun was not confined to that portion of the globe which is contained between the tropics, but was carried over the accumulated mountains of ice, at the northern and southern poles: which extraordinary circumstance, he thinks, easily and naturally explained, by supposing that the earth, instead of preserving the parallel position of its poles, presented each of them, alternately, to the sun's vertical beams.

It seems impossible to form any hypothesis free from difficulty: and each of those stated, bearing a greater or less degree of probability, supposes what, in fact, every theory must allow, an immediate interposition of divine power and agency. Admit only the fact, that HE who made the world, destroyed it by water; and he could be at no loss for means to accomplish his awful design. The quantity of water required is immense: but not impossible to be raised.† Who has descended to his central storehouse? or seen the magazine of his rain and hail, treasured up against “the day of wrath?” Who can affirm that God has not a sufficient quantity of water *in* the earth for this grand purpose? It has been proved that no less than *one thousand six hundred gallons* of water have been exhaled from *one acre* of land, and dispersed in the air, in *twelve* of the hottest *hours* of a summer's day, and when there had been no rain for above a month, and the earth was parched by continual heat!‡ Besides, the sacred writer is consistent with himself. He represents the earth originally covered, in its unformed state, with waters, till the voice of God said, “Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so.”§ If this theory be just, then is the deluge effected only by reducing the earth to its primeval state, and giving it over again to the dominion of the waters.

\* Etudes de la Nature. Tome I. Etude IV.

† See note 6, at the end of this Lecture.

‡ See note 7, at the end of this Lecture.

§ Gen. i. 9.

Admit only, from the reasoning of the first part of this Lecture, the fact of a deluge; and from the second, the hand of Omnipotence in the production of it; and there can be no difficulty which does not melt away under his resistless operations. Had there been no deluge, it were difficult to account for the universal traditions respecting it: still more so, to explain the appearances presented in the face of nature itself. It was impossible for Moses to impose the belief of it upon the Jews, appealing as he did to names found in the line of their immediate ancestors, and fixing a certain era for this wonderful event. Many of them were well acquainted with the contemporaries of Joseph: Joseph with the particulars of the life of Abraham: and Abraham lived in the days of the sons of Noah. Now, the Jews must have received traditionary accounts of every remarkable event, handed down through successive generations, in other channels besides the writings of Moses. Had his history clashed with these traditions, they could not have failed to observe it; and had he attempted to impose a fable upon them, they could not have failed to detect it. And such a detection, at the commencement of his history, could not have failed to weaken, in the minds of his contemporaries especially, the authority and validity of the whole.

But we must notice

### III. SOME OBJECTIONS RAISED AGAINST THIS ACCOUNT.

OBJECTION 1, is raised against THE ARK ITSELF. Many have supposed it too small for the purposes assigned to it. We might have presumed, had not Moses informed us, that a vessel so constructed, so designed, and so employed, could not have sprung from mere human contrivance. The length of it was three hundred cubits; the breadth, fifty; the height, thirty. The difficulty is to determine what was the exact measure of this cubit. Some fearing that the ark would not be sufficiently capacious for its destination, if measured by the common cubit, have enlarged its dimensions to extravagance. It is generally agreed, however, that they were common cubits: one of which, although formerly estimated at eighteen of our inches, is now allowed to contain twenty-two. According to this measurement, the ark must have been, in length,  $547\frac{2}{10}$  English feet; in breadth,  $91\frac{2}{10}$ ; in height,  $54\frac{7}{10}$ ; and its solid contents amount to  $2,730,781\frac{9063}{10000}$ : almost double what it would be by the former computation. The form of it was an oblong square, with a flat bottom, and a sloped roof, raised a cubit in the middle. It had neither sails, nor rudder; and was admirably adapted to float steadily on the water, without rolling, which might have endangered the lives of the animals: but it was unfit to endure a boisterous sea.

It consisted of three stories: each of which might be about eighteen feet high; and was partitioned into numerous apartments. It was, without doubt, so formed, as to admit a proper proportion of light, and air, on the sides; although the particular construction of the windows is not mentioned. The whole seems to have had another covering, besides the roof; probably made of skins, like that of the tabernacle. Noah is said, after the flood, to have removed the "Covering of the ark;" which cannot be supposed to be the roof, but something drawn over it, like the covering of the tabernacle; which is also expressed by the same Hebrew word; and such a covering was probably used to defend the windows.\* Upon this estimate, the ark appears to be sufficiently large and commodious, for the purposes for which it was constructed.

OBJECTION 2, arises from THE DIFFICULTY OF ACCOUNTING FOR THE PEOPLING OF AMERICA; AND FROM THE SUPPOSED IMPOSSIBILITY OF WILD CREATURES OF ALL KINDS EXISTING IN ONE PLACE. With regard to the latter of these difficulties, it is removed, if we suppose, what is at least probable, that there might be such a temperature of air before the deluge, as was suited to the constitution of every animal. Respecting the difficulty of peopling America, it is neither impossible, nor improbable, after the pattern afforded them in the ark, that some sort of vessel or flotilla, should be constructed, which would be sufficiently strong to convey them, by a north-east passage, to their destination. The greater difficulty is, the existence of wild creatures, and mischievous animals: which men neither would, nor could, transport; unless some restraint had been laid upon their ferocity, similar to that which existed while they remained in the ark. But the modern geographical discoveries have removed the weight of this objection. The straits which divide North America from Tartary, are so narrow, as to admit a very easy passage from one continent to the other; and it is not impossible that they might even have been united by an isthmus which time and the waves, in their combined influence, have demolished.†

OBJECTION 3, has been urged against THE DESTRUCTION OF INFANTS AMONG THE INHABITANTS OF THE OLD WORLD. We shall not attempt to develope the reason why the Almighty permits devastation among children: but we will venture to affirm, that this is no objection against the Deluge itself, as a fact, any more than against the

\* This account and calculation is principally extracted from *Anc. Univ. Hist.* vol. i. c. 7—on the *Deluge*.

† The reader may consult, on this subject, *Dodd. Lect.* pt. vi. § 8, under prop. cxix. p. 350, 351, 4to. edit.



existence of earthquakes, which equally bury infants in their ruins. There is an equal propriety in urging it against the one fact, as the other; and if it will not be admitted as an objection in the one instance, neither ought it to be pressed as a difficulty in the other. Those who oppose the fact on this ground, affirm that it is "contrary to the justice of God." We contend, with a learned writer,\* that "they have no right, in fairness of reasoning, to urge any apparent deviation from moral justice, as an argument against *revealed* religion; when they do not urge an *equally* apparent deviation from it as an argument against *natural* religion. They reject the former, and admit the latter, without considering, that, as to their objection, they must stand or fall together;" because the apparent deviation is the same in both cases.

OBJECTION 4, respects THE RAINBOW. The reasoning adopted is as follows:—The same causes must always produce the same effects; consequently, it is an absurdity in the Mosaic relation, to speak of the rainbow, as formed after the flood, and as the sign of a covenant then made. We grant that the rainbow is a phenomenon necessarily resulting from the nature of light, and the form and situation of falling rain; yet this objection may be answered two ways:

1. Some have supposed that the earth, like the garden of Eden, was watered, before the Deluge, not by rain, but by mist; in which case, no rainbow could exist.

2. The account of Moses does *not* directly assert, that the rainbow was then first formed; but merely that God appealed to it as a seal to his covenant. "I *do* set my bow in the clouds; and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth."<sup>†</sup> The language may, without constraint, be understood to imply, that the rainbow *did* exist before; but that *now*, for the first time, it is appealed to, and appointed, as the seal of a covenant.

We shall detain your attention farther, only while we attempt,

#### IV. TO IMPROVE THE SUBJECT.

How can we better succeed in this great object, than by pressing upon your consideration, the solemn event which the apostle, in the words read at the commencement of this Lecture, has connected with it? "The heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word, are kept in store, reserved unto fire, against the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men."

\* Bishop Watson, in his excellent *Apology for the Bible*.

† Gen. ix. 13.

Carry forwards, therefore, your attention, and your thoughts, to this "great and terrible day of the Lord." You are interested in it; and it is inseparable from the subject which you have been contemplating. Are men insensible of its approach? So were they of the threatening destruction hovering over the days of Noah; till one boundless scene of ruin opened upon their distracted sight, and swept them at once from life and hope for ever! Are those derided, who patiently wait the accomplishment of the divine promise, and expect the revelation of the Lord from heaven? It is no new thing. The world have ever been blind to their best interests; have ever sported with their own ruin. When Noah laid the first beams of his ark across each other, it is probable he did it amid the insulting shouts of a hardened multitude. The building advanced. Some admired the structure: some derided his plan: some charged him with enthusiasm, or with insanity: more were lost in sensuality; and all united in the desperate resolution, to bury his admonitions in the grave of oblivion. Still he entreated: still they spurned his instructions: still the edifice rose day after day: still the voice of gaiety was echoed on every side. With strange infatuation, they stopped their ears; and refused to "listen to the voice of the charmer," who solicited them with unwearied perseverance, and reasoned "so wisely." The roof is at length covered in. The danger becomes every hour more imminent. He presses his warnings upon them with increased energy: but, pointing to the unclouded sky, they laugh him to scorn, and load his ministration with contempt. It is closed! The last exhortation has been given, and he has wiped the last tear of insulted tenderness from his cheek. Ye blind, insensible mortals! what charm has "holden your eyes," that ye cannot see? Discern ye not the cloud that gathers over yonder mountain? The brute creation see it; and hasten for shelter to the ark. The family of Noah close the procession; they have entered their refuge; and even now "the door is shut!"—Oh! it is too late! Fraught with heavy indignation, the tempest lowers fearfully. Every "face gathers blackness." Yet scarcely is it perceived, before a new scene of ruin presents itself. Ah! there is no escaping the hand of God! The skies pour an unabating torrent. A hollow groan is heard through universal nature, deploring the impending destruction. The birds and beasts which remain, excluded from the ark, scream and howl in the woods, whither they had fled for shelter. The sea assaults the shore: the restriction of Heaven is removed: it passes its ancient boundaries: it triumphs already over the plains, and gains upon the hills. The ark floats upon its bosom. The despairing multitude fasten upon it an eye of distrac-

tion: they implore in vain the assistance of the prophet whom they had despised, and whose pitying eyes are again suffused with unavailing tears. He can bear it no longer. He retires to the innermost recesses of his vessel. In the phrensy of despair, parents clasp their children to their cold bosoms, and flee to the highest mountains. Where else could they resort for shelter? for the boundless sea saps the foundation of the firmest edifices. What is their desperation as the waves approach the summit! It is equally impossible to descend, to rise higher, or to escape. They have prolonged a miserable existence, a few hours, only to sink at last!—It is all in vain! “The waters prevail exceedingly: every high hill is covered; and fifteen cubits” over their loftiest summits, the flood rises in haughty triumph!

Do you turn pale at this sad relation? Ah! weep not for these, “but weep for yourselves!” Do you blame their blindness and infatuation? Behold, the finger of conscience points to you; and its voice pronounces of you individually, “Thou art the man!” Are there not “scoffers in these last days, walking after their lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.” Oh! this is wilful ignorance—this is incorrigible obstinacy! The great event, discussed this night, stands upon firm evidence; and it is the pledge of that second desolation to which we ought to be looking forwards. Are there not triflers with the long-suffering of God; who presume upon his patience, and his mercy; and slumber in the arms of thoughtless sensuality? Let these remember, that judgment procrastinated, is not indignation removed: that the storm, rising slowly, accumulates more strength and fury than a sudden, transient blast. “The day of the Lord will come”—will come “as a thief in the night!” Man, retiring weary from the labours of the day, and slumbering under the mantle of darkness, shall be scared from his sleep, “to sleep no more,” by the roar of a thousand thunders, and the crash of dissolving worlds! Darkness shall reign, at intervals, for the last time; and death shall lay down his sceptre for ever! Shaking off the fetters of sleep and of mortality, the man looks around him with an inquiring, distracted eye. Great God! what scenes of despair, and of ruin, present themselves! What language shall describe the horror of that day, in the contemplation of which, imagination fails? Kings, starting from their couch of down, or bursting from their tombs of marble, shall reluctantly resign the sceptres of their burning empires! With what unutterable dismay will they gaze upon the globe itself, as it rolls along infinite space, blasted, and consuming by the lightnings of heaven!



Oh! it is no fable! we urge upon you no idle imagination! Already the day approaches—it is even “nigh at hand”—“the judge standeth at the door!” The archangel is preparing to blow that blast, which shall “shake terribly” not only the earth, “but also heaven!” The glorified saints are looking forwards with “earnest expectation” to that day; and the spirits of the slaughtered redeemed cry, from under the altar, “How long, O Lord, how long!” All things are hastening to be placed under the feet of the Saviour. And then, “cometh the end”—the last, great day—the day that shall disclose

“A God in grandeur—and a world on fire!”

## NOTES.

NOTE 1.—Enumeration of ancient testimonies, to human longevity, by Josephus: Μαρτυρεῖσι δὲ μὴ τῷ λόγῳ πάντες οἱ παρ’ Ἑλλήσι καὶ παρὰ Βαβυλῶνι συγγραψάμενοι τὰς ἀρχαιολογίας· καὶ γὰρ καὶ Μανθεῶν ὁ τῇ τῶν Αἰγυπτίων ποιησάμενος ἀναγραφήν, καὶ Βηρώσσος ὁ τὰ Χαλδαϊκὰ συναγαγὼν, καὶ Μωχὸς τε, καὶ Εὐσιᾶιος, καὶ πρὸς αὐτοῖς ὁ Αἰγύπιος Ιερώνυμος, οἱ τὰ Φοινικικὰ συνταξάμενοι, συμφανεῖσι τοῖς ὑπ’ ἐμὲ λεγομένοις. Ησίοδος τε καὶ Εκαταῖος, καὶ Ελλάνικος, καὶ Ακυσίλαος, καὶ πρὸς τῆτοις Εφορος, καὶ Νικόλαος ἰστορεῖσι, τῆς ἀρχαίας ζήσαντας ἔτη χίλια.

*Joseph. Antiq. Jud. lib. I. cap. 3. Vol. I. Hudson's edit.*

I cannot find any passage in Hesiod directly specifying the years of the first men: but he gives a beautiful description of the golden age, and its influence in the prolongation of human life in *Dieb. et Oper.* v. 130, et seq. Hudson supposes, in his note upon this passage in Josephus, that *Ἡσιόδός* might be written for *Ἰσίδωρος*: “intelligendo *Isidorum Characenum*; qui (ut constat ex *Luciano* de Macrobiis) in *Historia sua* attulit exempla regum longævorum.” He says, however, that it is uniformly written *Ἡσιόδός* in all the Greek Manuscripts: but in the Latin, variously, *Isiodus*, *Esiodus*, *Isidorus*, and *Isidorus*.

The reference of this note is to page 78, of the preceding Lecture.

NOTE 2.—Testimony of Catullus to the infamy of the old world:

“Sed postquam tellus scelere est imbuta nefando,  
Justitiamque omnes cupida de mente fugarunt:  
Perfudere manus fraterno sanguine fratres,  
Destitit extinctos natus lugere parentes,  
Optavit genitor primævi funera nati,  
Liber ut innuptæ potiretur flore novercæ:  
Ignaro mater substernans se impia mato,  
Impia non verita est divos scelerare penates:  
Omnia fanda, nefanda malo permista furore  
Justificam nobis mentem avertere Deorum!

*Catul. Epith. Pel. et Thet.*

But when the earth became stained with nameless wickedness, and divers lusts banished integrity from the mind; then, a brother's hand shed fraternal blood—the son ceased to deplore his deceased parents—the father desired the funeral of his first born—the son to enjoy his unmarried step-mother—the impious mother

yielding to her thoughtless offspring, feared not to pollute the temple of the gods: all things, just and unjust, were thus blended together by furious passion; and the propitious mind of the gods turned away from us. Can there be a more striking confirmation of the apostle's assertion, respecting the heathen world, that "they were given over to a reprobate mind?" or a better comment upon the declaration of Moses, that "the earth was filled with violence?"

This extract refers to page 80, of the preceding Lecture.

NOTE 3.—Testimony to the deluge, from Abydenus, preserved by Eusebius: Μετ' ὃν ἄλλοι τετρεξάν, καὶ Σείσιθρος, ᾧ Κρόνος προσημαίνει μὲν ἔσσεσθαι πληθος ὁμβρων Δεσιθ πέμπτη ἐπὶ δέκα. κελεύει δὲ πᾶν ὃ, τι γραμμάτων ἢ ἐχόμενον ἐν Ἠλέε πόλει τῇ ἐν Σιππάροισιν ἀποκρίναι. Σείσιθρος δὲ ταῦτα ἐπιτέλεα ποιήσας, εὐθέως ἐπὶ Ἀρμενίαις ἀνάπλεε, καὶ παραυλικά μὲν κατελάμβανε τὰ ἐκ θεοῦ. Τριτὴ δὲ ἡμέρῃ ἐπεί τε ὕων ἐκόπασε, μετίει τῶν ὄρνιθων, πείρην ποιήμενος, εἴ που γῆν ἴδοιεν τῷ ὕδατος ἐκδῦσαι· αἱ δὲ, ἐκδεχομέναι σφίρας πελάγεος ἀχανέος, ἀπορέεσθαι ὅκῃ κατορμησονται, παρὰ τὸν Σείσιθρον ὀπίσω κομίζονται, καὶ ἐπὶ αὐτοῖς ἕτεραι· ὥς δὲ τῇσι τρίτῃσι ἐνλύχρει (ἀπικέαλο γὰρ δὴ πηλὴ κατὰ πλεοὶ τῆς τερσεως) Θεοὶ μὲν ἐξ ἀνθρώπων ἀφανίζουσι· τὸ δὲ πλοῖον ἐν Ἀρμενίᾳ περιέπληα ζύλον ἀληξφάρμακα τοῖσι ἐπιχωρίοις παρέιχετο.

Euseb. lib. IX. Præparat. cap. 12.

This extract is translated in page 81, of the preceding Lecture.

NOTE 4.—Assertion of Josephus, respecting the testimony of Berosus: Οὗτος τοίνυν ὁ Βηρωσὸς ταῖς ἀρχαιοτάταις ἐπακλιθεῶν ἀναγραφαῖς, περὶ τε τῆς γενομένης κατὰ κλυσμεν καὶ τῇ ἐν αὐτῷ φθορᾷ, τῶν ἀνθρώπων, καθάπερ Μωϋσῆς ὕτως ἰσθόρηκε καὶ περὶ τῆς λάρνακος, ἐν ἡ Νῶας ὅ τῃ γένεσι ἡμῶν ἀρχηγὸς διεσώθη, προσενεχθείσης αὐτῇ ταῖς ἀκρωρείαις τῶν Ἀρμενίων ὄρων.

Joseph. Contr. Appion. lib. I. Hudson's edit. vol. II. fol.

He appeals also to the same evidence in his *Antiq. Jud. vol. I. lib. i. cap. 3. Hudson's edit.*

The testimony of Grotius respecting Ararat; "Quos Moses Ararat vocat, Kardū transtulere Chaldæi interpretes, Cordyæos Josephus, Cordæos Curtius, Gordyæos scribit Strabo, lib. xvi. Plinius, lib. vi. cap. 27, et Ptolemæus."

Grot. de ver. Rel. Christ. § xvi. in not.

These extracts refer to page 82, of the preceding Lecture, where they are translated.

NOTE 5.—Lucian's statement of the opinions of the Grecians respecting the character of the old world, and the destruction of it by a deluge:

—ἐκείνων δὲ περὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων τάδε μυθεῖσθαι· ὕβρις αἱ κάρτα ἰόντες, ἀθέμιτα ἔργα ἔπρασσον, ὅτε γὰρ ὄρνια ἐφύλασσον, ὅτε ζεῖνες ἐδέχοντο, ὅτε ἰκετέων ἠνέκοντο, αὐτ' ὧν σφίσι ἡ μεγάλη συμφορὴ ἀπικέτο, αὐτίκα ἡ γῆ πολλὸν ὕδωρ ἐκιδούσῃ· καὶ ὄμβροι μεγάλοι ἐγένοντο, καὶ οἱ ποταμοὶ κατέβησαν μείζονες, καὶ ἡ θάλασσα ἐπὶ πολλὸν ἀνέβη, ἐς ὃ πάντα ὕδωρ ἐγένοντο καὶ πάντες ὄλοντο· Δευκαλίων δὲ μετὰ ἀνθρώπων ἐλίπετο ἐς γενεὴν δευτέραν, εὐδαλίης καὶ τῆς εὐσεβείας εἵνεκα· ἡ δὲ οἱ σωτηρίῃ ἡ δὲ ἐγένετο· λάρνακα μεγάλην, τὴν αὐτὸς ἔχε, εἰς ταύτην ἐσβιδάσας παῖδάς τε, καὶ γυναῖκας ἐωλύε, ἐσέβη· ἐσβαίνοντι δὲ οἱ ἀπικοντο σύες, καὶ ἵπποι, καὶ λεόντων γενεά, καὶ ὄφεις, καὶ ἄλλα, ὅσα ἐν γῇ νέμονται, πάντα ἐς ζεύγεα· ὁ δὲ πάντα ἐδέχετο, καὶ μιν ἐκ ἰσθίνοντο· ἀλλὰ σφίσι μεγάλη διόθεν φιλίῃ ἐγένετο· καὶ ἐν μὲν λάρνακι πάντες ἐπλευσαν, ἐς τε τὸ ὕδωρ ἐπέκρωττε· τὰ μὲν Δευκαλίωνος πέρι· Ἕλληνες ἰσθόρουσι. Lucian. lib. de Syria, &c.

The translation of this extract is given in page 82, of the preceding Lecture.

NOTE 6.—Extract, from Dr. Geddes, respecting the quantity of water required for a universal deluge; and the sources whence it might be supposed to be derived.

*Fifteen cubits upwards, did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered.* This has been always accounted one of the most unaccountable phenomena of the deluge; and has, more than any other circumstance attending it, perplexed and puzzled commentators. The most ingenious solution of the difficulty which I have ever met with, is one sent to me, some years ago, by Sir Henry Englefield, which I shall here give in his own words:

The diameter of the earth being taken at 8000 miles; and the highest mountain being supposed four miles above the level of the sea,\* the quantity of water requisite to cover them, will be a hollow sphere of 8008 miles diameter, and four miles thick; the content of which, in round numbers, is 800,000,000 cubic miles.—Let us now suppose the globe of the earth to consist of a crust of solid matter, 1000 miles thick, enclosing a sea, or body of water, 2000 miles deep; within which is a central nucleus of 2000 miles in diameter; the content of that body of water will be 109,200,000,000 cubic miles; or about 137 times the quantity of water required to cover the surface of the earth, as above stated. Now water, by experiment, expands about one 25th of its whole magnitude, from freezing to boiling; or one hundredth of its magnitude for 45 degrees of Fahrenheit's thermometer. Suppose, then, that the heat of the globe, previously to the deluge, was about 50 degrees of Fahrenheit's, a temperature very near that of this climate; and that a sudden change took place in the interior of the globe, which raised its height to 83 degrees; a heat no greater than the marine animals live in, in the shallow seas between the tropics; those 23 degrees of augmented heat would so expand the internal sea, as to cause it to more than cover the surface of the globe, according to the conditions above mentioned: and if the cause of heat ceased, the waters would of course, in cooling, retire into their proper places.—If the central nucleus be supposed 3000 miles, and the internal sea only 1500 miles deep, its content will then be 99,200,000,000 cubic miles; or 125 times the water required: and in that case, an additional heat of 36 degrees to the previous temperature of the earth, will be sufficient to produce the above described effect.—It is scarcely necessary to say, that the perfect regularity here supposed to exist in the form of the interior parts of the globe, is of no consequence to the proposed hypothesis; which will be equally just, if the above-given quantity of waters be any how disposed within the earth.—Neither is it here proposed to discuss the reality of a central fire, which many philosophers maintain, and many deny.—It may not be unworthy to remark, that the above hypothesis, which does not in any way contradict any law of nature, does singularly accord with the Mosaic narrative of the deluge: for the sudden expansion of the internal waters would, of course, force them up through the chasms of the exterior crust, in dreadful jets and torrents; while their heat would cause such vapours to ascend into the atmosphere, as, when condensed, would produce torrents of rain beyond our conception.

“The possibility of a universal deluge, then; of a deluge rising *fifteen cubits above the highest mountains*, can hardly be denied. It is not at all necessary to suppose with Sir Henry, that the antediluvian mountains were as high as those of the present earth. They may have been of a very different form and size, and composed of other materials.”

*Dr. Geddes, vol. 1. Crit. Rem. on Gen. vii. 20, &c.*

After all, this great critic, as usual, labours to lower the Mosaic account; and thinks, “that a great deal of the fabulous is mixed with the history of Noah's flood.” The humble opinion of the writer of these Lectures, differs widely from him, in this respect; and he is satisfied with taking this ingenious hypothesis, which *even* Dr. Geddes admits, proves such a deluge *possible*, without accepting his concluding observations.

This extract refers to page 87, of the preceding Lecture.

NOTE 7.—Experiment by the Bishop of Landaff, on the quantity of water exhaled from the earth on a summer's day:

“Who would have conjectured, that an acre of ground, even after having been parched by the heat of the sun in summer, dispersed into the air above 1600 gallons of water, in the space of twelve of the hottest hours of the day? No vapour

\* “This is more than the height of the Andes.”



is seen to ascend; and we little suppose, that in the hottest part of the day, it more usually does ascend than in any other. The experiment from which I draw this conclusion, is so easy to be made, that every one may satisfy himself of the truth of it. On the 2d day of June, 1779, when the sun shone bright and hot, I put a large drinking glass with its mouth downwards, upon a grass-plate which was mown close; there had been no rain for above a month, and the grass was become brown: in less than two minutes, the inside of the glass was clouded with a vapour, and, in half an hour, drops of water began to trickle down its inside, in various places. This experiment was repeated several times with the same success.

"That I might accurately estimate the quantity, thus raised, in any certain portion of time, I measured the area of the mouth of the glass, and found it to be twenty square inches: there are 1296 square inches in a square yard, and 4840 square yards in a statute acre; hence, if we can find the means of measuring the quantity of vapour raised from twenty square inches of earth, suppose in one quarter of an hour, it will be an easy matter to calculate the quantity which would be raised, with the same degree of heat, from an acre in twelve hours. The method I took to measure the quantity of vapour, was not, perhaps, the most accurate which might be thought of, but it was simple and easy to be practised: when the glass had stood on the grass-plate one quarter of an hour, and had collected a quantity of vapour, I wiped its inside with a piece of muslin, the weight of which had been previously taken; as soon as the glass was wiped dry, the muslin was weighed again, its increase of weight showed the quantity of vapour which had been collected. The medium increase of weight, from several experiments made on the same day, between twelve and three o'clock, was six grains, collected in one quarter of an hour, from twenty square inches of earth. If the reader takes the trouble to make the calculation, he will find, that above 1600 gallons, reckoning eight pints to a gallon, and estimating the weight of a pint of water at one pound avoirdupois, or 7000 grains Troy-weight, would be raised, at the rate here mentioned, from an acre of ground, in twenty-four hours.

"It may easily be conceived, that the quantity thus elevated, will be greater when the ground has been well soaked with rain, provided the heat be the same. I did not happen to mark the heat of the ground, when I made the fore-mentioned experiments. The two following, are more circumstantial: the ground had been wetted, the day before I made them, by a thunder-shower; the heat of the earth, at the time of making them, estimated by a thermometer laid upon the grass, was ninety-six degrees: one experiment gave 1973 gallons from an acre in twelve hours; the other gave 1905.—Another experiment, made when there had been no rain for a week, and the heat of the earth was one hundred and ten degrees, gave after the rate of 2800 gallons from an acre in twelve hours. The earth was hotter than the air, as it was exposed to the reflection of the sun's rays from a brick wall."

*Watson's Chemical Essays, vol. 3, p. 52—56.*

This quotation bears reference to page 88, of the preceding Lecture.

## LECTURE IV.

THE DESTRUCTION OF BABEL, THE CONFUSION OF LANGUAGE, THE  
DISPERSION OF THE PEOPLE, AND THE ORIGIN OF NATIONS.

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GEN. XI. 1—9.

And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech. And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there. And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them throughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar. And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth. And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. And the Lord said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city. Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the Lord scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.

OBADIAH, 3, 4.

The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee, thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high; that saith in his heart, Who shall bring me down to the ground? Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the Lord.

WE left Noah floating, with his family, upon the bosom of an overwhelming deluge, which had exhausted the fountains of the deep, to wash away the stains of guilt from the surface of the earth. We are now to accompany this favoured family, from the ark that preserved them, to the wasted, deserted plains, once more visible. What an interesting picture, does the sacred historian present, to the eye of the imagination! Behold, an altar erected—a family surrounding it—the rainbow extending its sublime arch across the face of heaven—and the Eternal himself appealing to it, as the seal of a gracious covenant, and a pledge of security to the human race! On the one hand, may be seen the ark on the elevation of Mount

Ararath: on the other, strewed thick and sad, the mournful remains of those who had perished by the waters. All is silent—while the patriarch adores his omnipotent Preserver; and presents his sacrifice, with the mingled emotions of pity, of gratitude, and of faith.

Of PITY. Could he view the scene of desolation around him, without suffering one tear of compassion to fall? Impossible! And well might a patriarch's bosom entertain this divine and generous principle, when she takes up her residence, a welcome guest, in heaven! She throws her softest tints over those blissful regions, without impairing either their beauty or their tranquillity; and sheds her sweetest balm upon their inhabitants, without destroying either their happiness or their repose. Her lily is interwoven with the roses which form celestial garlands; and her drops of compassion mingle with the tears of exquisite delight, which glitter in immortal eyes. She takes up her lasting abode in the bosom of the Son of God. She conducted the Saviour through every trying scene which he witnessed, in his passage through this valley of tears. "He wept with those that wept:" and "in all our afflictions he was afflicted." She accompanied him every step of his journey; and placed her chaplet of cypress upon his conquering head, when he expired on Calvary. In proportion as we possess the spirit of Jesus, we shall become the companions of pity. She will teach us to bind up the broken heart: to wipe away the tear from the eye of sorrow; and to pour the oil and the wine of sympathy, into the wounded bosom. O Religion! how have thy adversaries slandered thee, when they represent thee, as hardening the heart! Christianity instructs us to "love our enemies:" teaches those to weep, who never wept before; softens the obdurate spirit; melts down the ferocious disposition; controls the furious passions; quickens the sensibilities of nature; transforms the instruments of cruelty into implements of husbandry; becomes the strongest, and most permanent, bond of society; and, in every point of view, meliorates the condition of humanity.

Of GRATITUDE. As the patriarch had seen, with sorrow, the destruction of the world, he was preserved, in mercy, to behold the renovation of it. His consecrated ark had floated safely, during the prevalence of the waters, and now, that they were abated, he descended from it, upon the face of nature, smiling, as a bride newly adorned. He received from HIM, who is the Sovereign Disposer of all events, a promise, that the serene sky should lower no more to destroy; and that the hand that balanced the poles of heaven, should roll the seasons round in their order. "I will establish my covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more



by the waters of a flood.” “While the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease.” With ‘the distinction which had been made between himself and his family, and the whole human race, in a moment of punishment so signal, fresh in his memory; and with these words of mercy sounding in his ears; surely, he could not but kneel before his altar with gratitude. It is gratitude which tunes the harps of heaven, and touches them with the finger of harmony. And when gratitude was extinguished in the bosoms of “a third part” of the sons of God, the order of heaven was deranged, the harmony of heaven was suspended, the symphonies of heaven were silenced; war first reared his hideous form, hell first received existence, and angels became demons. Nor can this sacred principle be annihilated in any bosom, excepting those over which Satan holds undivided empire. It could not, therefore, be excluded the heart of Noah.”

Of FAITH. There extended the seal of the covenant over the retiring cloud. “He believed and it was accounted to him for righteousness.” He saw the fidelity of God, sparkling in the brilliant colours, formed by the rays of the sun, falling upon the descending shower. And did he not look forwards to Him, who should finally remove the curse, plant “a rainbow round about the throne,” and make all things new?” Surely, he, from whom a new world was to spring, was not suffered to remain ignorant of the Redeemer of fallen man! He remembered the promise that the seed of “the woman should bruise the head of the serpent;” and his sacrifice ascended with acceptance, because he beheld in the type, with the eye of faith, Jesus, the great antitype.

Did Noah find acceptance in raising an altar to God, and in collecting his family around it? Every good man may avail himself of the same privilege, enjoy the same intercourse, and find the same acceptance. Every *Christian* family will have an altar consecrated to the Deity; before which, they will esteem it their duty, their privilege, and their happiness, to bow; and around which, they will assemble, to present their morning and evening sacrifice of prayer and thanksgiving. Permit me to press the question. Fathers of families! have *you* a family altar? Do you statedly, and constantly, bring your children, and your household, to a throne of grace, and present them before God? Do you mingle your praise, and your supplications, as the morning pours a flood of light upon your habitation, and the evening stretches her shadows over it? No “flaming sword, turning every way,” guards, from access, the throne of God: no darkness, and thunder, forbid your near ap-

proach. A voice, from the most excellent glory, proclaims, "Draw near, with boldness, to the throne of grace; that ye may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." To this invitation, is added a command:—"for all these things I *will* be entreated." And wo to the man, who lives in the habitual neglect of this command, and keeps his household back from God: for he will "pour out his fury upon the nations that worship him not, and upon the families that call not upon his name!"

Noah having built an altar, and gratefully surrounded it with his family, received the divine blessing on himself and his household. Permission was granted to man, for the first time, to eat, not only the produce of the ground, but flesh also. Then, also, was impressed upon the brute creation, that fear of him, which the revolution of thousands of years has not been able to efface. "And the fear of you, and the dread of you, shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered." To this hour, there are few among the beasts of prey which roam the forest, that will not avoid the sight of even an unarmed man: unless driven to desperation by hunger, or provoked to madness by pursuit. The noble, majestic lion, loses his native fierceness, in proportion as he dwells near human habitations. The horse, the ox, the elephant, unconscious of their strength, are easily disciplined, and freely lend their powers, to serve their more feeble master. And this impress of God, this fear of man, remains undiminished to the present moment. Upon this occasion, also, the first denunciation against murder was issued. "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man." This solemn institution was confirmed, ratified, and enforced in the laws of Moses: and it has ever formed a fundamental law, in all civilized, and well regulated states.

We have long dwelt with pleasure upon Noah's piety: we are now to unveil his weakness. The characters portrayed in this volume are not perfect characters: otherwise they would not be men; neither would the history of their pilgrimage afford any solace to us in this vale of desertion and misery. For, alas! every day too sadly evinces that *we* are imperfect characters; every day discloses to our astonished eyes, some new trait of ingratitude, of disobedience, of sloth, and of depravity. It would be no consolation to us, to be informed, that God is now preserving their "eyes from tears," and their "feet from falling," for ever. "Ah, that may well be true"—would be our answer—for "their faith was always in lively exercise: their hope was never shaken: their zeal always

burned with inextinguishable purity: their love never waxed cold. No difficulties impeded them: no enemies vanquished them: no dangers affrighted them: no considerations deterred them from running, with holy alacrity, the race that was set before them. ‘*Therefore*, are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and HE, that sitteth on the throne, shall dwell among them.’ But *we* are ever ready to turn aside. At best, we advance, ‘faint, yet pursuing.’ With wavering hopes, and a trembling faith; with languishing affections, and perplexing fear; we hardly reach forwards to our home; and are incessantly apprehensive, lest we should eventually fall short of it!” But what, if we should prove to you, that these were characters imperfect as yourselves? Many spots soiled their white raiment, while they walked through this world: many blemishes stain their memory. Yet “are they before the throne of God,” for your encouragement; and as monuments of HIS mercy, whose grace shall finally make you more than conquerors over your corruptions, and your enemies. In the mean time, observe, that as they were subject to your imperfections, they also, while upon earth, participated your chastisements, and were exposed to similar calamities with yourselves.—Behold, then, this great man, this good man, overtaken by the sin of drunkenness! On this occasion, one of his sons forgot that filial sympathy which should cover a parent’s imperfections, and which warmed the bosom of his brethren: in consequence of which, Ham drew down upon himself, and upon his family, his father’s curse; while a blessing, soft as the dew, descended upon the heads of Shem and of Japheth, and upon their posterity.

At length we arrive at that eventful period, which is the winding up of the longest history: “All the days of Noah, were nine hundred and fifty years—and *he died!*” Six hundred years of his life were passed upon the face of the old world; and three hundred and fifty, he walked upon the ground of the new one. Three hundred and sixty-five days, had he floated upon the surface of a boundless ocean: rescued with his family from destruction; and bearing with him “this testimony, that he pleased God.” This it was, that encircled his hoary head with a diadem of glory: he was “found in the way of righteousness.” The longest life “is but as yesterday, when it is passed:” but “Noah walked with God”—with that Being, whose days are commensurate with the ages of eternity; and who first provided for him, and afterwards bestowed upon him, an unfading inheritance.

When the sacred writer had conducted the venerable patriarch to his last, peaceful retreat—the grave; he favours us with a gene-



alogy of his descendants. As his history particularly concerned the Israelites, he has given us the line of Shem *entire*; and *his only*. As to the offspring of the other sons of Noah, his design appears to have been, merely to bring them down to the dispersion of the people, in order to leave to posterity the names of the first founders of nations; and then to dismiss them. Hence, although he mentions the Canaanites as a people with whom the people were concerned, yet he deduces the genealogy of Ham no farther; and it is shorter than those of Cush and Mizriam, by *one* generation.

The predictions of Noah were remarkably fulfilled: but to unfold the various events in correspondence with them, were, of itself, the labour of a lecture; and, indeed, belongs to the department of scriptural prophecy. He had said, “Cursed be Canaan,\* a servant of servants shall he be to his brethren.” This was fulfilled in the reduction of the Canaanites, the immediate descendants of Canaan, by the Israelites, the posterity of Shem. It was again fulfilled, in the subjugation of the Egyptians, the descendants of Ham; both by the Persians, the posterity of Shem; and by the Grecians, the offspring of Japheth. Tyre was built by the Sidonians; the descendants of Ham; and was twice subdued, and at length wholly desolated, by the posterity of his brethren. The Carthaginians were descendants of Ham; the Romans, who subdued them, derived their line from Japheth. The whole continent of Africa, was peopled, for the most part, by the children of Ham: it is become the mart of the whole world for slavery; and the Europeans, the oppressors of this wretched people, are the posterity of Japheth.—The blessing pronounced upon Shem, was, “Blessed be the Lord God of Shem:” or rather, “Blessed of the Lord my God, *be* Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant.” Shem was peculiarly blessed in *two* respects: the Church of God was among the posterity of Shem, for many generations; and from him, “according to the flesh,” the Messiah came.—Of Japheth, he said, “God shall enlarge Japheth.” All Europe; the lesser Asia; Media; a part of Armenia; Iberia; Albania; the wide regions of the North, once in the hands of the Scythians, now inhabited by the Tartars; India and China; and, *probably*, the continent of America; are possessions of Japheth. Farther, “He shall dwell in the tents of Shem.” This seems to allude to the unions, which sometimes took place between the posterity of these brethren, when they conjointly fought against the descendants of Ham. There have been some exceptions, when the descendants of Ham have subdued those of Shem, and of Japheth; but, in general,

\* It is a singularity in this prophecy, that Ham was cursed in the name of his youngest son, Canaan.

Ham has been the servant of his brethren: and it is worthy remark, that the four grand empires of the world, the Assyrian, the Persian, the Grecian, and the Roman, descended, the two former from Shem, and the two latter from Japheth.\*

We are afterwards introduced to Nimrod, who is called "a mighty hunter before the Lord." Commentators have been greatly divided respecting this extraordinary personage; since the words of Moses may be taken in a good or a bad sense. There is nothing in his short history, bearing the least reproach; except, indeed, his name, which signifies *a rebel*. Enough, however, is said to render it evident that he grasped at empire; and obtained it. Some ascribed to him the project of building Babel; which, considering his enterprising disposition, so far as we can judge of it, from the short narrative of the sacred writer, is not improbable. Others say, that he left the country, because he would not consent to the scheme; which, for the reason we have assigned, we do not think at all likely. And not a few conclude, that he was, at that period, very young.

Having passed over the link of history which connects the deluge with the present subject of discussion, we hasten to the immediate object of our meeting at this time: to consider the fact—**THE DESTRUCTION OF BABEL**; connected with **THE CONFUSION OF LANGUAGE**; and **THE DISPERSION OF THE PEOPLE**; and thence to trace, **THE ORIGIN OF NATIONS**. We shall aim simply, To illustrate and establish this event; and to deduce from it some considerations adapted to our individual improvement. We shall attempt,

#### 1. TO ILLUSTRATE, AND TO ESTABLISH, THE EVENT.

In order to which, it will be necessary to consider the several parts of the history, as recorded by Moses: to produce the testimony of other ancient writers; and to answer some inquiries which may arise from the subject. We shall consider,

##### I. THE SEVERAL PARTS OF THE HISTORY, AS RECORDED BY MOSES.

V. 1.—"*And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech.*" Speech is the vehicle of communication, by which one man transmits his thoughts to another: nor shall we burden your attention in tracing its origin; an inquiry which, we think, would lead us up to God himself. We take it for granted, without wasting the time in frivolous discussion, according to the literal meaning of the express words of Moses, that "the whole earth *was* of *one* language, and of *one* speech." But it may be expected, that some-

\* See Newton on the Prophecies; vol. i. Dissertation 1. *Noah's Prophecy*.

thing should be said respecting the primitive tongue—this universal language spoken by our fathers, before the confusion of speech. In addition to those languages, which are commonly known by the title Oriental, the Armenian, the Celtic, the Coptic, the Greek, the Teutonic, and the Chinese, demand the preference on this point. The Armenian, the Celtic, and the Coptic, come before us laden with the venerable marks of hoary antiquity; and the former builds its claim upon the resting of the ark on its mountains. The Greek appeals to its extent and copiousness. Some have attempted to derive the Hebrew itself from the Teutonic. The arguments produced in favour of the Chinese, are principally, the antiquity of that nation: their early acquaintance with the arts and sciences: their separation, in all ages, from all other nations: and the singularity of the language itself; which consists of few words, all monosyllables, and is remarkable for its simplicity, having no variety of declensions, conjugations, or grammatical rules. These singularities have been deemed strong marks in its behalf, as the original language: besides the presumption that Noah was the founder of the Chinese nation. Each of the Oriental languages have strenuous supporters: but the palm is more generally awarded to the Syriac. The Jews warmly defend the Hebrew tongue; and refer to the etymologies of the names transmitted to us by Moses. In some instances the sacred historian himself has marked their propriety, and the relation which they bear to the person, or place designed by them: but there are others, not so distinguished, in which no such relation can be traced; and the question to be decided is, whether he has preserved the original terms, or, according to the practice of all ancient writers, accommodated them to the dialect of the language in which he wrote? The most probable conclusion, from this endless diversity of opinion, is—either that the original language is lost, or that it is spoken under variations which render it equivalent to a new tongue; or, that, even supposing it to exist, it cannot be ascertained.

V. 2. "*And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there.*" The extent and situation of the land of Shinar, is not easily determined. There the city and tower of Babel were erected. Thither, Nebuchadnezzar carried away the vessels of the temple, to the house of his god: which, in all probability, was the temple of Belus, in Babylon. This confirms the general opinion that the temple of Belus was erected upon the ruins of the tower of Babel; or, at least, that Babylon stood upon, or near the spot, where this vast design was projected, and partly executed. The part of Mesopotamia, chosen



by the astronomers, in the time of Khalifah al Mamum, for measuring the content of a degree of a great circle, was the desert of Senjar; the nature of the experiment required the selection of a large and level country; and this is, probably, part of the ancient plain of Shinaar.\* Upon the whole, we will venture to call it Chaldea.

V. 3 and 4. "*And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them throughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar. And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.*" It has been imagined by some, that this elevation was reared in fear of a second deluge: we deem this improbable, from their choice of situation, and because other, and sufficient, motives, are assigned in the history. The celebrated and eloquent Saurin says: "The impressions which the waters of the deluge had made upon the imagination of Noah, and of his family, caused them to live in places the most elevated, and the least accessible to inundations. They dwelt upon the mountains of Armenia, in the neighbourhood of that place where the ark rested. But a hundred and forty-four years afterwards, according to the computation of one of the most celebrated chronologists, these fears were entirely dispersed: they diffused themselves over the valleys and the fields, and occupied the plains of Chaldea, or of Babylon."† Had they designed this tower as a bulwark against a second deluge, they would have chosen an elevated country, rather than a plain. Two reasons are assigned, in their consultation, for this project:

1. That they might make themselves *a name*: that they might leave a memorial behind them. The desire of living in the remembrance of posterity, and of securing an immortal renown, has burned with inextinguishable ardour, in the human bosom, in every age. Absalom set up for himself a pillar; because he had "no son" to "keep his name in remembrance." The principle which laid the foundation of the tower of Babel, raised the lofty pyramids of Egypt; has reared many a proud city; and, more than once, has turned the world into "a field of blood."

2. That they might *not* be *dispersed*: "*lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.*" Their project to live together, opposed the manifest design of Deity, that the whole earth should

\* Anc. Univ. Hist. vol. I. book i. chap. 2. The reader may find much learned discussion, on all the points under review in this part of the Lecture, in that laborious work.

† See note 1, at the end of this Lecture.

be speedily peopled. Some have translated the words—"Let us make us a *sign*, lest we be scattered;" and conclude that they intended this tower to serve as a beacon, or mark, by the direction of which, they might avoid straying with their flocks, (for the first men were shepherds) and regain the city, which they had chosen for their residence, after the temporary wanderings required by their occupations. The result of their consultations, whatever were their motives, was the commencement of that stupendous work—the tower of Babel.

Respecting the tower itself, Moses informs us, that "they used brick instead of stone, and slime instead of mortar." This slime, was a pitchy substance, called *bitumen*, which abounded in the neighbourhood of Babylon; and, forming a strong cement, was admirably adapted to their purpose. It is universally admitted, that the tower had its ascent on the outside—a broad road gradually winding round it: of course, the tower itself grew proportionably narrow as it increased in height, and assumed a spiral form. If you imagine a path, winding round the representations which are made of the pyramids of Egypt, you will form a complete idea of the general description, transmitted to us, of the tower of Babel.

V. 5—9. "*And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. And the LORD said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city. Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the LORD did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the LORD scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.*" There is a merciful condescension to be perceived in all parts of the sacred writings, in stooping to our conceptions, by the use of familiar terms, and of language continually on our own lips. Had the inspired penmen been commissioned, at all times, to represent things as they really are, we should have derived no benefit from their communications: we should have had words, but not ideas: we should have been incessantly floating on the surface of uncertainty, bewildered, and lost, in the loftiness of the subject. But God speaks to us, as though he were "bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh:" he enters into all our passions: he uses our language: he brings down heavenly subjects to the standard of our comprehension. In travelling through the land of scripture discovery, we are at home: we are surrounded by objects, and encompassed with ima-

gery, perfectly familiar to us; and “a wayfaring man, though a fool, cannot err therein.” The consequence is, that this volume is found to speak to the heart: it “approves itself to every man’s conscience:” it possesses an irresistible influence over his life, while it descends to the level of his understanding. Because we have no conception of pure spirit—spirit distinct from matter—or of its powers—or of its agency—or of its operations—the Deity is represented as acting like a man. We read of his penetrating eye; his powerful hand; his majestic voice; his trackless footsteps; his melting bowels; his compassionate heart. He is angry: he relents: he loves: he entreats. He ascends and descends; he rides upon the clouds; he walks through the earth. He is a father—and he has a father’s heart. He manifests paternal anxiety—paternal affection—paternal superintendence—paternal displeasure—paternal forgiveness. Every one feels the force of the image; every one sees in himself, the ungrateful, perverse child; every one understands his relation to God, and acknowledges the obligations under which he is laid to him. The imagery renders every thing luminous: while the representation of facts as they are—a Being without passions, and without any resemblance to any one object with which we are acquainted—would overwhelm the mind with perplexity, and overshadow the subject with impenetrable darkness. Of the class described, is the passage before us: in it are many bold figures of speech; for the Eternal fills all space with his presence, and can neither ascend nor descend; and when such language is used, it is in accommodation to our conceptions, and to our modes of speaking.

The work was displeasing to God; and the source of his displeasure was, that it opposed his express command, “replenish the earth:” which could not be done while they continued in one place. In order to scatter them abroad, he compelled them to relinquish their project, by confounding their language: from which circumstance, the city and tower took the name of *Babel*, which signifies *confusion*.

THE CONFUSION OF LANGUAGE, became the means of the DESTRUCTION OF BABEL: and from its importance and consequences, is an event worthy the place which it occupies in the Mosaic history. As to the manner in which it was effected, as in every subject so remote and undetermined by the historian himself, there is a diversity of sentiment. Some suppose that the words only imply a misunderstanding among the builders; and that he set them at variance, by causing a division of counsel. Others understand by them a temporary confusion of speech; causing them to misapply terms, and misconceive each other, in the use of the same lan-



guage. Others are of opinion, that a variety of inflections were introduced, and perhaps some new words; which disturbed and perverted the former manner of expression. But the plain and express terms of the history go beyond these hypotheses; it is evident that the inspired historian designs to exhibit a complete confusion of tongues; which will account for the endless diversity of languages, and the source of the division of mankind into different and distinct nations. There are languages which have no visible connexion with any other tongue whatever; and the Chinese is an exemplification of our assertion. This could never have been, had the confusion consisted of a mere variation of dialect; and we wish it to be understood, as our decided opinion, that at the destruction of Babel, new languages were framed; and this by the miraculous and immediate interposition of divine power.

THE DISPERSION OF THE PEOPLE, which followed, we do not imagine was a disorganization of the whole mass of mankind, as a tempest terrifies and scatters a multitude: but simply a division of them; as at the quiet separation of an orderly assembly, every man falls into his respective party, and seeks his home. Every man, it is probable, betook himself to the company that spake his own new language; and consented, with them, to separate from others. We think that this is implied by the language which Moses adopts, in speaking of the division of the earth by the several bands. Of the sons of Japheth, it is said—"By these, were the isles of the Gentiles divided." Respecting the descendants of Ham, he concludes, "These are the sons of Ham, after their families, after their tongues, in their countries, in their nations;" unquestionably referring to their situation after their dispersion. The same language is used in relation to Shem. Nothing here wears the appearance of hurry and disorder: on the contrary, the inference appears to us to be, that the dispersion of the people was regular, and the division of the earth performed without confusion.

With respect to THE ORIGIN OF NATIONS, at this distance of time from the great event, little can be said with certainty. A mere outline of the larger divisions can only be made; and this, with scarcely any degree of precision. SHEM, appears, for the remainder of his days, to have hovered about the plains of Shinar. From his descendants, sprang the inhabitants of Persia,\* Nineveh,† China,‡ Mesopotamia, and Phrygia; comprehending the countries westward of Assyria, as far as the Mediterranean.§ HAM, probably, dwelt in Egypt. His descendants occupied Shinaar,|| Arabia,¶

\* From *Elam*.

§ From *Aram*.

† From *Ashur*.

|| From *Nimrod*.

† From *Arphaxad*.

¶ From *Cush*.

Ethiopia,\* Africa,† Phenicia, and the land of Canaan.‡ When JAPHETH left Babel, it is uncertain where he settled. His descendants dwelt in Phrygia,§ the eastern part of Asia Minor,|| Cappadocia, and Galatia.¶ Most of these divisions, after all, must be considered as conjectural.\*\* So far we have followed the Mosaic history: we shall produce,

2. THE TESTIMONY OF OTHER ANCIENT WRITERS. The confusion of tongues “is mentioned by profane historians, who write, that mankind used the same language till the overthrow of the tower of Babylon.”†† The fable of the attempt of the giants to climb the heavens, probably owes its origin to some traditions relative to this fact. It was a common mode of speaking in many nations, and in the East especially, when things exceeded the ordinary height, to say, that “they reached to heaven.”‡‡ When, therefore, it was said, “Let us build a city, and a tower, whose top may reach to heaven,” no more was intended, than “Let us build a tower exceedingly high.” But when the design descended, by tradition, in its native boldness of expression, to nations unacquainted with the Mosaic history, and with eastern language; who were, also, fond of the marvellous, and skilful in fable; they raised the story of the giants’ war with heaven, and celebrated this imaginary contest in verse, as harmonious as majestic.§§ Josephus quotes one of the Sibyls, in the following words: “When all mankind spoke the same language, some of them elevated a tower immensely high, as if they would ascend up into heaven: but the gods sent a wind, and overthrew the tower; and assigned to each a particular language; and hence the city of Babylon derived its name.”||| Abydenus uses similar language: “There are, who relate, that the first men, born of the earth, when they grew proud of their strength and stature, supposing that they were more excellent than the gods, wickedly attempted to build a tower, where Babylon now stands. But, the work advancing towards heaven, was overthrown, upon the builders, by the gods, with the assistance of the winds; and the name, Babylon, was imposed upon the ruins. Till that period, men were of one language: but then, the gods sent among them a diversity of tongues. And then com-

\* From *Mizraim*.

† From *Phut*.

‡ From *Canaan*.

§ From *Gomer*.

|| From *Ashkenaz*.

¶ From *Togarmah*.

\*\* See, on this perplexed subject, the laborious researches of the writers of the *Anc. Univ. Hist.* vol. I. book i. chap. 2, § 6.

†† *Anc. Univ. Hist.* vol. I. book i. chap. 2, § 5, p. 439.

‡‡ Consult Homer, in various places; and read Deut. I. 28, also IX. 1.

§§ Homer. *Odys.* 30. Ovid. *Met. lib. I.* Virg. *Georg. I.* &c. See, also, note 2, at the end of this Lecture.

||| See note 3, at the end of this Lecture.

menced the war between Saturn and Titan.”\* Before we dismiss this part of the subject, we will only add, that “it is a false tradition of the Greeks, that Babylon was built by Semiramis; and this error is refuted by Berosus, in his Chaldaics, Josephus in his first book against Appion,” and others.† It remains that we attempt,

### 3. TO ANSWER SOME INQUIRIES ARISING OUT OF THE SUBJECT.

Was there any thing criminal in the attempt to build this city and tower, considered in itself? We feel no hesitation in answering—No. But a thing perfectly lawful, and innocent in itself, may become criminal from the motives in which it originates, or the consequences connected with it. There were two ways in which this attempt, harmless in itself, was rendered criminal. First, the foundation of the work was laid in *ambition*. And what is ambition, but another name for every complicated vice which degrades humanity, and fills the world with sorrow? What so soon erases human feelings, as ambition? What so hardens the heart against the voice of wo, as ambition? What violates the sanctity of truth, and disregards principles usually deemed sacred in society, with such facility, as ambition? What so completely transforms the character, as ambition? What so readily leads the bosom astray, as ambition? What peoples the grave, like ambition? How early it began to work in the world! and how unceasing and unimpaired has its influence continued! “Let us make us a name!” was the hope that deluded these first men; and many a subsequent projector, on the same vain principle, has built a Babel to his own confusion! And what heart is altogether dead to the passion? It was criminal, secondly and principally, we presume, because it had a tendency to counteract the *designs of God*: which designs had been explicitly communicated. The mandate of Heaven is “Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.” This required them to spread themselves abroad upon its surface. But they deliberately and avowedly adopt a contrary resolution; and “build a city and a tower, *lest*” they should “be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.”

Would not men, by degrees, have separated without the alteration of language? It is very probable, that ambitious projects, in which they might not all concur, would have effected a separation: but in such a case, we can scarcely imagine, that such a division would take place without bloodshed. By the interposition of Heaven, they separated peaceably. Besides, time would slowly have brought that to pass, which God accomplished at once; and had it

\* See note 4, at the end of this Lecture.

† See note 5, at the end of this Lecture.



been left to operations so gradual, the replenishing of the earth had been greatly retarded. Not to say, that without a dissonance of language, to a great degree the divisions of nations would have been lost; and they would, probably, have blended again together. To this hour, language is the strongest line of separation drawn between man and man; and one of the most powerful bulwarks of the distinction subsisting between different nations.

Would not language of itself have changed, as the people multiplied, without the interposition of Divine power? Of this, there can be no question: but, in this case, it would only be a change of dialect, and not of language. In the revolution of a few centuries, what alterations have been made in our own tongue! Roll back but three or four hundred years, and we feel ourselves incapable of reading the dialect which our forefathers spoke. Yet, rude and barbarous as it appears, in it may be traced the basis of our present copious language. And, estimating the changes which time would have made, they will be found too gradual to have effected any separation. The alterations produced by years, are small, and slowly brought about: they consist, in changing a few words in the course of a century: forming a few others; and dropping, as obsolete, an inconsiderable number before in use. This effects no division in a nation; and the same progression would have brought about none in the great body of mankind. Generation after generation would have passed, while the most trifling changes were forming. No motives would have been furnished for their living apart: no necessity would have arisen, from this quarter, for their dispersion. But Deity interposed, to effect his own purpose; which was readily and completely accomplished by the confusion of language. We hasten,

## II. TO DEDUCE FROM THIS FACT, SOME CONSIDERATIONS ADAPTED TO OUR INDIVIDUAL IMPROVEMENT.

The prophet, whose words, at the commencement of the Lecture, we connected with the Mosaic history, has furnished us with a thread of reflection, which cannot fail to conduct us to the right use which we ought to make of this singular narrative. He has pronounced the application of the subject. "The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee, thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high; that saith in his heart, Who shall bring me down to the ground? Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the LORD!" Had he stood by and seen the project

of these men, in its proud advance, and in its disastrous issue, he could not have painted their presumption, their folly, and their humiliation, in more striking language. The following remarks appear clearly deducible from these words:

1. MOST OF OUR ERRORS ORIGINATE IN THE "PRIDE OF OUR HEARTS;" AND THIS PRIDE WILL ALWAYS BE FOUND TO HAVE "DECEIVED" US.

It was this pride that dictated the haughty language of the king of Babylon, when, from the battlements of his palace, he looked down upon his beautiful city, and said—"Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?" O, how the "pride of his heart deceived" him! "While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; the kingdom is departed from thee!" The "same hour" was he "driven from men," and his "dwelling was with the beasts of the field;" his reason was withdrawn,—“and his body was wet with the dew of heaven.” Behold, he that would be thought a God, is become less than a man! Nor were the balances of power again put into his hand, till he had been brought to confess, "that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will;" and to acknowledge, in a repentant decree, that "those who walk in pride, he is able to abase."

Happy had it been for his successor, if this awful display of divine justice, had wrought, in his heart, obedience. But Belshazzar learned not wisdom from his grandfather's humiliation. He exceeded his great progenitor in impiety. He stood on the pinnacle of empire, till he was giddy with gazing upon the rolling world beneath him! The forces of Cyrus surrounded the city: but trusting in its impregnable strength, the defence of the river, and the greatness of his stores, he laughed his enemies to scorn. The feast was spread, and the revellings had commenced. Death hovered round his court, and destruction brooded over his city, while he was sunk in senseless security. And now, the voice of joy, and the noise of riot, resound through the palace. The monarch calls upon his nobles to devote the hours to gaiety; to scatter their fears to the winds; to drink defiance to the warrior advancing to their very gates; and, to fill the measure of his iniquity, to add insult to the miseries of his captives, to crown dissipation with sacrilege, he requires, last of all, the vessels of the sanctuary, that they might be profaned by their application to not merely common uses, but to the vile purposes of debauchery. It is done. The king is lost in

unbounded pleasure, and intoxicated with unlimited power.—In one moment, the voice of riot ceases,—silence, as profound as the stillness of the grave, reigns through the whole palace—every tongue is chained—every eye is fixed—despair lowers on every countenance—the charm is broken—and the night of feasting is turned into unutterable horror! See! yonder shadow, wearing the appearance of the fingers of a map's hand, glides along the wall of the palace opposite the monarch, and writes, in mysterious characters, "MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN." What has changed that youthful countenance? What has chased its bloom of beauty, and drawn on it the strong lines of misery? Behold, this king, who lately dreamed that he was more than mortal, trembling on his throne! "The joints of his loins are loosed, and his knees smite one against another!" What the army of Cyrus could not do, a supernatural hand, writing four little words, has effected; and his soul melts within him through terror! But say, what is the cause of this premature distress? Perhaps yonder inscription declares the permanence of his kingdom; and inscribes, in those hidden characters, the destruction of his enemies? Ah no!—Conscience read too well the handwriting; and interpreted the solemn sentence of impending ruin, long before Daniel explained the inscription! While all was riot, during the first part of the night, and dismay, during the remainder, Cyrus had diverted the river from its course, had entered the city, through its exhausted channel, unperceived, and was now at the palace gates. The empire was lost; the captive Jews were liberated: and "that same night was Belshazzar, the king of the Chaldeans, slain." Behold another, added to the innumerable sad evidences, that the "pride of the heart" fatally deceives, and finally ruins those who cherish it.

2. SITUATIONS IN LIFE, WHICH SHOULD LAY THE FOUNDATION OF GRATITUDE, WHEN UNSANCTIFIED, BECOME THE BASIS OF REBELLION.

The prophet addressed those "who dwelt in the clefts of the rock, and whose habitation was high:" who enjoyed, both an elevated, and a secure, situation. This should have ministered to thankfulness: it should have reminded them of the hand that raised them to the eminence which they occupied. But no: it kindled "pride of heart:" it inflamed the imagination with the desire of independence: it stirred up rebellion: it implanted in their bosoms false confidence: it betrayed them to their ruin. They said, "Who shall bring me to the ground?" But the birth of their presumption was the death of their security: for while they spake these "great, swelling words" of arrogance, the protection of God



was withdrawn. Adversity has "slain its thousands:" but prosperity, its "tens of thousands." Those that have weathered the tempests of suffering, have been engulfed in the whirlpool of dissipation. Elevation makes the head unsteady, and the feet totter; therefore, if Providence exalt you, hold fast the hand which conducts you to the perilous summit.

3. NO SITUATION IN LIFE, HOWEVER APPARENTLY FORTIFIED, IS SECURE, WHEN GOD IS OUR ENEMY.

"Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the LORD." How clear and express are these words! "Though thou exalt *thyself*."—When God elevates a man, he gives him grace equal to his temptations: but there are, who make haste to be rich—who press through every consideration to power—who *will* be great—and "exalt *themselves*" at the sacrifice of every principle. Yonder city rises on that determination. The tower rapidly advances. It is of prodigious strength and magnitude. But its desolation is decreed in heaven; and although it aspired to the stars, it is brought down to the ground. Let us, therefore, stoop to rise. Let us "humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God; and he shall exalt us in due time." If we would build securely, we must lay the foundation of our edifice on the top of yonder everlasting hills, and set up its walls in the unchangeable heavens: for

"He builds too low, who builds beneath the skies!"

What, then, is their state, who are labouring to ascend to heaven by a superstructure of their own elevation? who reject "the righteousness of God, and go about to establish one of their own?"—"The pride of their heart hath deceived them;" and divine agency alone can destroy the delusion. What shall be said to those who imagine themselves in security, yet have not "fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before them?" Even now is the decree of heaven gone forth against all ungodliness: even now is the sentence of condemnation issued against the impenitent: even now conscience thunders, "Thou art weighed in the balances and art found wanting!"—and God confirms the decision!

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## NOTES.

NOTE 1.—Les impressions qu'avoient faites sur l'imagination de Noé et de sa postérité les eaux du déluge, les firent demeurer dans les lieux les plus élevés, et les moins accessibles aux inondations. Ils habitèrent sur les montagnes d'Ar-

ménia, voisines du lieu où l'arche s'étoit arrêtée. Mais cent quarante quatre années ensuite, selon la supputation d'un des plus célèbres chronologistes,\* ces frayeurs étant entièrement dissipées, ils se répandirent dans les vallées et dans les campagnes, et ils occupèrent les plaines de la Chaldée, ou de la Babylonie.

*Saur. Discours, &c. sur la Bible, Tome I. Disc. x. p. 65.*

This extract is translated in page 105, of the preceding Lecture.

NOTE 2.—The giants' war described by different ancient poets.

Οἶσσαν ἐπ' Οὐλύμπῳ μέμασαν θέμεν, αὐτὰρ ἐπ' Οἶσση  
Πηλῖον εἰνοσίφυλλον, ἃν' ὕραν ἄμβρατὸς ἔειη  
Καὶ νύ κεν ἔξετέλεσσαν, εἰ ἦες μετρεῖν ἴκοντο.

*Hom. Odys. xi.*

Proud of their strength, and more than mortal size,  
The gods they challenge, and affect the skies;  
Heav'd on Olympus, tott'ring Ossa stood,  
On Ossa, Pelion nods with all his wood.

*Pope's Hom. Odys. b. xi. l. 388—538,*

—sævumque Typhoëa  
Et conjuratos cælum rescindere fratres.  
Ter sunt conati imponere Pelio Ossam  
Scilicet, atque Ossæ frondosum involvere Olympum :  
Ter Pater extractos disjecit fulmine montis.

*Virg. Georg. lib. i. v. 279—283.*

—And cruel Typhoëus, and the brethren, leagued to scale heaven.  
Thrice, indeed, they attempted to pile Ossa upon Pelion,† and to roll woody Olym-  
pus‡ upon Ossa: thrice the Father of heaven overthrew the mountains, thus  
heaped up, with thunder.

Neve foret terris securior arduus ether ;  
Affectasse ferunt regnum cœleste gigantes,  
Altaque congestos struxisse ad sidera montes.  
Tum Pater Omnipotens misso perfregit Olympum  
Fulmine, et excussit subjecto Pelio Ossam.

*Ovid. Met. fab. vi. lib. i. v. 151—155.*

Nor were the gods themselves more safe above,  
Against beleaguer'd heav'n the giants move :  
Hills pil'd on hills, on mountains, mountains lie,  
To make their mad approaches to the sky.  
Till Jove, no longer patient, took his time  
T' avenge, with thunder, their audacious crime ;  
Red lightning play'd along the firmament,  
And their demolish'd works to pieces rent.

DRYDEN.

*Garth's Ovid, b. i. l. 193, &c.*

These extracts refer to page 109, of the preceding Lecture.

NOTE 3.—Πάντων ὁμοφώνων ὄντων τῶν ἀνθρώπων πύργον ἀκοδόμησάν τινες  
ὑψηλοῦσιν, ὡς ἐπὶ οὐρανὸν ἀναβησόμενοι δι' αὐτῶν οἱ δὲ Θεοὶ ἀνέμους ἐπιπέμ-  
ψαντες ἀνέβρεψαν τὸν πύργον, καὶ ἰδίαν ἐκάστω φωνῇ ἔδωκαν, καὶ δια, τῷ  
Βαβυλῶνα συνέβη κληθῆναι τὴν πόλιν.

*Joseph. de Antiq. Jud. lib. I. cop. 4, tom. I. Hudsoni edit.*

This quotation, preserved by Josephus, is translated in page 109, of the pre-  
ceding Lecture.

\* Voi. Petau. Abrégé Chronol. Tom. I. p. 12, et Tom. III. p. 3.

† Two high mountains in Thessaly.

‡ A hill between Thessaly and Macedon, so high, that the heathen poets usually apply its name to heaven.

NOTE 4.—Testimony of Abydenus, preserved by Eusebius:—Εἴντι δὲ οἱ λέγουσι, τὰς πρώτας ἐκ γῆς ἀνασχομένης ῥάμῃ τε καὶ μεγέθει χαυνωθέντας δὲ Θεῶν καταφρονησάσας ἀμείνονας εἶναι, τύρσιν ἡλίβαλον αἰερεῖν, ἵνα νῦν Βαβυλῶν ἐστί. ἥδε τε ἄσπον εἶναι τὰ θρανῶ· καὶ τὰς ἀνέμους Θεοῖσι βοηθέοντας ἀναλγείψαι τερὶ αὐτοῖσι τὸ μηχανήμα· τῶν δὲ ἐρεῖπια λέγεσθαι Βαβυλῶνα, τῶς δὲ ὅλης ομογλώσσους ἐκ Θεῶν πολυθῶν φωνὴν ἐνείκασθαι. μετὰ δὲ Κρόνω τε καὶ Τιτηνι συσληναι πόλεμον.

EX ABYDENO.

*Euseb. Præp. ix. c. 14.*

Translated in page 110, of the preceding Lecture.

NOTE 5.—Remark of Grotius respecting the building of Babylon: Falso autem à Græcis proditum, conditam à Semiramide Babylonem, etiam Berosus in Chaldaicis prodidit, ut nos Josephus docet contra Appionem, primo: eundemque errorem tum ex Philone Biblio, tum ex Dorotheo Sidonio refellit Julius Firmicus. Vide et quæ de gigantibus et turri ex Eupolemo nobis adducit Eusebius. *Præparat. Evangelicæ, lib. xx. cap. 17.*"

*Grot. de Relig. Christ. § xvi. in not. 63.*

The substance of this note is given in page 110, of the preceding Lecture.



## LECTURE V.

## THE DESTRUCTION OF SODOM AND GOMORRAH.

## GENESIS XIX. 15—26.

And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest they be consumed in the iniquity of the city. And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the Lord being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city. And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain, escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed. And Lot said unto them, Oh, not so my Lord: Behold, now, thy servant hath found grace in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy mercy, which thou hast showed unto me in saving my life; and I cannot escape to the mountain, lest some evil take me, and I die: Behold, now, this city is near to flee unto, and it is a little one: oh, let me escape thither, (is it not a little one?) and my soul shall live. And he said unto him, See, I have accepted thee concerning this thing also, that I will not overthrow this city, for the which thou hast spoken. Haste thee, escape thither; for I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither. Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar. The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar. Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven; and he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground. But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.

## 2 PETER II. 6.

—Turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them with an overthrow; making them an example unto those that after should live ungodly.

THE history of Genesis is peculiarly interesting, because it soon leaves the wide concerns of nations, and attaches itself to individuals. It discovers to us the Deity commanding “light to shine out of darkness;” and presents a short, yet comprehensive, account of things the most sublime and difficult: it relates the destruction, and the renovation of the world; it gives us a clew by which we are enabled to trace the origin of nations: and after having thus opened a boundless scene before us, it relieves the mind, bewildered and wearied in its researches, by fixing the attention upon one quiet object. We find ourselves transported into the bosom of a family;

and are encompassed before we are aware, **with** the beauties and the pleasures of domestic life. We unite in their devotions: glow with their ardour; weep with their sorrows; and rejoice in their prosperity. The fluctuations of empires, the revolutions of states, the achievements of ambition, distract and tire our attention: but in entering into the concerns of a family, every man feels himself at home—in pursuing the hopes and fears, the labours and disappointments, of an individual, every man traces the image of his own anxieties and pleasures.

When we turn over the pages of profane writers, what different scenery is presented! We justly admire the beauties of Homer: as a poet truly sublime; possessing a genius which soared high above the common standard of human intellect. In energy of composition, in loftiness of language, in richness of imagery, he stands unrivalled—he ranks next to the sacred writers. But in his works, from first to last, we are dragged through fields of slaughter; or trace the mortifying windings of human corruption; or are surrounded with scenes over which humanity drops tears of unavailing regret. We hear, in strains the most harmonious, a hero sung, returning from the battle, covered with human blood. The martial music that announces his approach, is drowned in the shrieks of orphans. The laurel of which he proudly boasts, was nourished in the emurpled plains of carnage, and snatched from the field of death.

Hail, peaceful retreats! Ye calm, sequestered, tranquil tents, that stretched your quiet shadow over the head of the venerable patriarch, and shielded him from the heat of the day—welcome to the mind's eye! Far be the scene of desolation! Approach, ye gentle shadows that once lived in this valley of tears; and even now that ye are borne away to heaven, return to our imagination, and revisit us in the sacred pages! Let the maddening world seek “the battle of the warrior with confused noise:” we love to observe the pleasing bonds of friendship, and to admire the domestic felicity of a pious family. To the hero, who delights in “garments rolled in blood,” we consign the pages that describe, in colours, alas! too natural, the horrors of war. Be it ours to listen to the music of the grove; to trace the windings of the rivulet; to read the name of God in the starry heavens; and to follow the good man through his chequered life, to a “city of habitation. While others burn with the ardour of the warrior, let us glow with the exalted piety shining through the characters of those good men, who borrowed all their lustre from friendship with God!

After the memorable event, which formed the subject of discussion in the last Lecture, we are introduced, rather suddenly, to the

great progenitor of the Jewish nation: in whose "seed," it is promised, "all nations of the earth shall be blessed." Terah, the father of Abraham, descended in a direct line from Seth. Idolatry had already commenced, and was widely diffused, when "Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran, his son's son, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife; and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan; and they came unto Haran, and dwelt there. And the days of Terah were two hundred and five years: and Terah died in Haran." Idolatry was probably the cause of this removal. The city in which they dwelt was the centre of superstition: it was called *Ur*, which signifies *fire* or *light*; a name which is probably given it, like Heliopolis, because it was devoted particularly to the worship of fire, and consecrated to the sun.\* It appears that God had expressly testified his will, that Abraham should proceed to Canaan; and, obeying the call of Heaven, "he went out, not knowing whither he went." At an advanced age, this patriarch left his home, and his connexions: for he was "seventy-five years old, when he departed out of Haran." Lot, his brother's son, accompanied him. Possibly, as he was childless, it was Abram's intention to adopt him: but a better and a stronger reason, for his attachment to his uncle, was that the hand of Heaven had touched his heart: and that he acted in obedience to the same divine mandate, which had led Abram into a strange land, even when the pressure of years was bending his steps towards the valley of the shadow of death.

Oh, the triumphs of faith! it overlooks intervening years, and regards the promised blessing as already in possession! It removes every difficulty; answers every objection; and never rests till its end is obtained! Exercised by delays, it patiently endures: corrected by trials, it prepares its possessor for the good to which it is pressing forward; and, crowned with ultimate success, it throws over him a glory, undiminished by the revolution of years, and untarnished by the hand of age!

To manifest how large a portion of this grace this truly great man possessed, he was named, "the father of the faithful," and so pleasing in the eyes of Deity were the traits of his character, that God conferred upon him a title more dignified, more glorious, and more enviable, than the greatest monarch, and the proudest conqueror ever enjoyed—he was called, "the Friend of God."

Yet was he but a man! His exalted character—and his holy life were sometimes tarnished with human weakness. Oh! where was

\* See note 1, at the end of this Lecture.



his faith in the protecting hand of Heaven, when unguardedly, yet deliberately, he sought refuge in prevarication, to save himself from violence in Egypt, on account of his wife? "Say, I pray thee, thou art my sister!" It was not, indeed, an absolute falsehood in point of fact; but it was a wilful intent to deceive, which enters directly into the nature, and forms all the character, of lying. The compassion of God to human infirmity, was manifest, in casting a mantle of forgiveness over this sinful pusillanimity. The hand of Deity was still stretched out in his defence; and his unchangeable Friend was better to him than his fears. But as he used unlawful means to secure his safety, his sin was made his punishment. Pharaoh, justly exasperated at the deception practised upon him; and fearing the anger of God, who had afflicted his house with great plagues; restored his wife, but banished him from his dominions. Thus, simply, in the use of the means, to rely upon God, in the hour of peril, will always defend us from danger, and deliver us from evil: but to distrust the Deity, and to shelter ourselves under our own unlawful, or sinful, devices, exposes us to incalculable difficulties, and will involve us in trouble, in the very midst of deliverance.

As Abraham journeyed in the road by which he had descended into Egypt, he came again to an altar, which he had before set up, in his way thither. Sweet are the recollections of kindnesses received; and pleasant the memorials of mercies departed! If we were to accustom ourselves to rear tokens of remembrance for every assistance which we derive from God; and to erect an altar where we receive a mercy; how many evidences for good would be presented in the retrospection of our lives! and the review of the past, would create confidence for the future. The moss might grow over the pillar, and the fire of the altar would go out: but the inscription would be fresh on the tablet of memory, and gratitude would kindle the purer flame of affection in the heart. Thus Abraham reared an altar in his way to Egypt; and found it again on his return. Thus Jacob elevated a pillar, at Bethel, after his vision of God; and with what feelings did he revisit it, when he was delivered from his fears, and increased in his blessings! Thus "Samuel" took a stone, "and set it up between Mizpah and Shen, and called the name of it Ebenezer, saying, Hitherto hath the Lord helped us!" It is not necessary that we should erect these outward memorials: but let the pillar be raised in our bosoms, and the inscription read in our lives!

Multiplied in goods, at length it became necessary that Abraham and Lot should separate. There are few blessings of life unalloyed

—few trials unmixed. The good that we pant after, has some unseen evil annexed to it, which will arise to cloud it in the very moment of possession; and the evil that we deprecate produces some happy effect, which does not always cease when its immediate cause is withdrawn. Adversity often unites the various branches of a family—prosperity as frequently separates them. The one teaches them that they ought to have a common concern—the other has an unhappy tendency to persuade them that they have a separate interest—and in many instances the latter is but too successful! Prosperity divided Abraham and Lot. The place was too strait for their flocks; and the herdmen, on either side, had augmented the difficulty by contention. Oh! who will not admire the spirit of Abraham? “And Abraham said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between thee and me—between thy herdmen and my herdmen—for we are brethren! Is not the whole land before thee? Separate thyself, I pray thee, from me. If thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right: or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left!” Although the elder, he thought it no disgrace to yield; and, by his submission, proved his greatness of mind. As the younger, it was the duty of Lot to have stooped: as the superior, Abraham might have commanded. But no—his language is, “We are brethren!” Lovely spirit of pure and undefiled religion! how it fosters the charities of human life! how it soothes the turbulence of passion! how it promotes the peace of society! It quenches the spark that was just bursting into a conflagration. It unites more closely the knot that was almost unfolded. It knits together the link that was nearly broken. It extinguishes the torch of war; and banishes contention from the domestic circle. Lot chose the plain of Jordan, near Sodom and Gomorrah, into which he afterwards entered, and where he resided; and it was “well watered every where, as the garden of the Lord.”

The chain of history is broken, to relate in its order, a battle which was fought in the vale of Siddim. This event is recorded in a style exactly suited to the contest. The abrupt manner in which it breaks in upon the peaceful history, appears adapted to the relation of a tumult, which suddenly destroyed the harmony of the country, and depopulated cities, previously slumbering in tranquillity. Where now is the fruitful plain? the valleys watered by a thousand rills? and the smiling pastures, which charmed the eye of Lot? Ah! war has shaken his destructive scourge over them—has blasted their verdure—and transformed, by his withering frown, this terrestrial paradise into a desolate wilderness! Lot himself was taken prisoner. No sooner were the tidings brought to Abram,

than he roused to exertion; and arming his household, to the amount of three hundred and eighteen men, he rescued his brother, and delivered the vanquished captives. The only difficulty arising here is this: how was it possible for Abram, with three hundred and eighteen men, to oppose successfully *four* kings; and to prevail over their armies already flushed with conquest? To remove this apparent objection to the sacred history, it is necessary to remark, that these kings were nothing more than rulers of four little cities, close by each other, whose combined forces, in that battle, probably, did not so considerably exceed Abram's armed servants as a superficial reader might imagine. It should also be remembered, that Abram closely pursued, and overtook them, when they were wearied with the toils of battle, sunk in revellings, and unsuspecting of danger. The nerve of war was relaxed; and the softness of sensuality had already overpowered them. The servants of Abram possessed their full vigours; and the banner of divine protection waved over their heads.

On his return from this conquest, we are introduced to a very extraordinary personage. Melchisedec met him, blessed him, and received tithes at his hand. Little is known, and much has been conjectured, respecting this august stranger. His names appear to denote a character of moral excellence. *Melchisedec* signifies *king of righteousness*; and *Melchisalem*, translated in our Bibles, "king of Salem," implies *king of peace*. The apostle who wrote to the Hebrews, considers him as a type of the Lord Jesus; and describes him "without father, without mother, without descent; having neither beginning of days nor end of life." The obvious meaning of these declarations is, that we know nothing of his birth—nothing of his death—neither can we trace his genealogy. Introduced thus abruptly, he disappears as suddenly; and we hear of him no more. The veil is lifted to discover him; and having just seen him, it is dropped—and hides him from us for ever!

The toils of battle are succeeded by a solemn interview with Jehovah. "The word of God came to Abram in a vision." It was a word of consolation; it was a message of encouragement. A son was promised; and it was declared that his seed should be, "as the stars of heaven,"—innumerable. As a ratification of this solemn engagement, he was commanded to prepare a sacrifice. During the whole day, he waited the promised visit from Heaven; "and when the fowls came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away. But "When the sun was going down, a sleep fell upon Abram; and lo, a horror of great darkness fell upon him." Then the Deity renewed the promise before made to him; and predicted



the slavery and the deliverance of his descendants in Egypt. And this was the sign of the covenant: "It came to pass, that when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold, a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp, that passed between the pieces."

O Christian! in religious worship, guard against intruding thoughts: they are as the fowls descending to pollute, and to devour, thy sacrifice: like Abram, let it be thy effort to drive them away. Guard the offering from the unhallowed intruders; and if God delay, patiently wait the manifestation of his presence. "The vision is for an appointed time; it will come, it will not tarry" beyond the moment of divine appointment. Enter with solemnity into the presence of God; and approach him with seriousness. Every visit from the Divinity, is awful. "A horror of great darkness fell upon Abram." "And Jacob awakened out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not. And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!"

A new source of sorrow soon arises; and Abram's domestic tranquillity is broken, by a contention between his wife and the servant, whom she had given to cover what she deemed her reproach. What a chequered scene is the life of the best of men! Sometimes irradiated with the glory of divine intercourse: at others, clouded by public, or domestic, trial. Abram is, "a stranger, and a pilgrim." The beauty of his wife insnares him in Egypt. His prevarication drives him thence. Their mutual prosperity renders a separation between him and Lot necessary—and effects the division. War breaks in upon his repose; and requires him to "crush his aged limbs in ungentle steel." He forgets his labours and sorrows, in the blessings of divine communion, and in the soothing promises of a gracious covenant; when a contention is kindled, which consumes his dearest comforts; an affliction springs up, which touches him in the most tender part; and his house becomes "divided against itself." Trials from without may be endured; and the man retires from the scene of strife and mortification, to a smiling family circle; he regains his temper, reassumes his tranquillity, renews his smiles, and forgets his vexations; but when domestic harmony is destroyed, the very sources of peace are dried up; and it is in vain to look abroad for consolation. The man's joys are polluted at their very fountain; and all their separate streams will necessarily flow defiled through all their ramifications. Peace affrighted, frequently flies from the tumults of the world, and alights, an angel form, in the bosom of a family: but if she is a

stranger at home, we shall look for her in vain at the exchange of merchandise, and in the public walks of life.

The issue of this contest was—Hagar fled. While she was prosperous and vain, she was left to taste the bitterness of her own folly: but the moment earth abandoned her, Heaven took up her cause: God became the friend of the fugitive; and her name no sooner appeared on the list of the desolate, than the care of her fortunes was transferred from man to the Deity; and he became her guardian. She was culpable: and her fault had its correspondent penalty. Her foolish pride had imbittered the peace of the family; and she lost the shelter of the roof under which she introduced discord. We are displeased with the culprit: but we are moved at her punishment. A voice more than human is heard in the solitude; and arrests her attention. An angel is sent to her with a message full of consolation. Her eyes, which were clouded by sorrow, no sooner glanced upon her unexpected and illustrious visitor, than a gleam of hope illumined them: but when he unfolded the singular character, and the future fortunes of her unborn child, they brightened into the full radiance of joy. It was ordained that his name should be Ishmael: and it was predicted concerning him, “He will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man’s hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren.” His descendants, the Arabs, have well accomplished the prophecy, at every period of their history. Living by plunder, and in perpetual warfare with all the world—remote from cities, and scattered in wandering tribes over the desert—resisted, yet invincible—they are “wild men;” their “hand is against every man”—and “every man’s hand is against” them—and they “dwell in the presence of all their brethren.” Heaven does not interpose to cherish a proud spirit, but to subdue it; and Hagar, having provoked the harshness with which her mistress treated her, is expected to make concessions, and commanded to return to Sarai. Her master’s roof once more shelters her; and under its shadow the promised child is born.

Thirteen years from this period, God renewed his covenant with Abram; and gave the seal of circumcision. On this memorable occasion, the names of the patriarch, and of his wife, were changed to ABRAHAM and SARAH, as more appropriate to the blessings that awaited them. *Abram* signifies *high*, or *exalted father*—a name of great respectability; *Abraham* implies *father of nations*—a name that embraces the latitude of the divine promise. *Sarai* signifies *my princess*—an appellation of fond regard: *Sarah* implies a *princess*—a title of honour, dignity, and dominion.

In the same year the Deity again visited him as he sat at the door of his tent on the plains of Mamre. Three personages, apparently men, approached him: but although so thick a veil concealed them, he soon discovered that they were more than human. The promise of a child, by Sarah, was confirmed by new protestations. We presume not to develop the mystery of these three extraordinary characters. Various conjectures have been formed respecting them; and to listen to conjectures is a fruitless and an endless labour. The person who remained with Abraham, when two departed towards Sodom, carries features of marked pre-eminence; and is expressly called JEHOVAH. Some have supposed, that an angel, bearing the commands of Deity, was honoured with that awful name, and used the lofty and dignified language which appears on this part of the sacred record. We believe that, on this supposition, this instance is unparalleled in the scriptures. Others, again, imagine, as it appears to us, with greater reason, that it was the Son of God, attended by two angels. To him, this great and lofty name belongs by right; and to him, it is repeatedly assigned in the Bible. Jeremiah applies it to Jesus Christ without scruple. "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous branch; and a king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days, shall Judah be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; *and this is the NAME whereby he shall be called*—JEHOVAH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS."<sup>\*</sup>

The two angels having departed, the august personage, who bears every feature of Deity, and whom Abraham addresses with all the humility which a deep sense of the divine presence alone can inspire, imparted his displeasure, and his designs against Sodom and Gomorrah, with the cities of the plain.† The remembrance of Lot conspired with the feelings of humanity, to raise the combined voices of affection and of pity on behalf of the rebels doomed to destruction. Compassion touched his heart for the offenders, while he loathed their guilt; and the residence of a part of his own family among them, suggested a plea—"Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?" His language is powerful; for the heart dictated it; but it is submissive; for the spirit of real religion directed it. What a pattern for us, in our addresses to the Deity! "Behold, now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the LORD, which am but dust and ashes!"—Oh, let not the LORD be angry, and I will speak!"—and this humility introduces and pervades every petition. What a reproof to those who dare to approach the Majesty of heaven

<sup>\*</sup> Jer. xxiii. 5, 6.

† See note 2, at the end of this Lecture.



irreverently; and to speak with unhallowed familiarity to the high and lofty One who inhabiteth the praises of eternity!

According to the hospitality of the ancients, Lot sat at the gate of the city to invite to his habitation any stranger who might enter. To refresh the heart of the traveller, wearied with the toils of the day, and way-worn; to wash his feet; to give him a morsel of bread, a pillow for repose, a smile of peace; and to send him on his way rejoicing, in the morning—this was practical religion, beaming forth in her native simplicity, from a patriarch's eyes. The two angels, who had left Abraham, approached Sodom. Lot addressed them in language which implied that he was about to receive, and not to confer an obligation. "Behold, now, my lords; turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house, and tarry all night, and wash your feet, and ye shall rise up early, and go on your ways. And they said, Nay, but we will abide in the street all night. And he pressed upon them greatly; and they turned in unto him, and entered into his house; and he made them a feast, and did bake unleavened bread, and they did eat." This is the politeness of nature; and the true method of conferring a favour. It does not appear that, at this time, he knew them: and, referring most probably to this event, the apostle who wrote to the Hebrews directs, "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers; for thereby some have entertained angels unawares."

We draw a veil over the brutal scene which follows.—It is sufficient to remark, that such was the extreme and unpardonable wickedness of those detestable cities, that the indignation of God, manifested on their polluted plains, must be completely justified, even in the apprehension of short-sighted mortals.

At length their commission is opened before Lot. He is commanded to bring all that he held dear from a place devoted to destruction. He was compelled reluctantly to abandon his sons-in-law: who regarded him "as one that mocked." The angels hastened his lingering steps—urged his immediate departure—snatched him from his dangerous hesitation—and left him not, till they had conducted him to a place of safety. "Then the LORD rained upon Sodom, and upon Gomorrah, brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven."

We have now touched the principal point of the present Lecture. THE DESTRUCTION OF SODOM AND GOMORRAH is confirmed and established by evidences at once short, comprehensive, and satisfactory. They are included in the following arrangement: The narrative of Moses; the testimony of ancient writers; and the features of desolation remaining on the spot.

## 1. THE NARRATIVE OF MOSES.

We have selected for our contemplation, the moment when the attention is arrested by the conviction of impending danger; and the point of history where the interest of the reader is excited in anticipation of its issue. This sacred writer discovers in this, as in every record of his pen, singular ability in touching the hearts; while he preserves a wonderful simplicity throughout the whole narration. All is nature in his descriptions; and his assertions bear, on their very face, the impress of truth. With what grandeur the scene opens upon us! The day dawns, which is to vanish from the eyes of the wicked before its meridian; and they gaze, unconscious of danger, upon the earliest glories of the east, which are so soon, as it respects them, to be extinguished in eternal night. Lot emerges from the polluted scenes of depravity, an instance of the goodness of God; and escapes the desolation which demonstrated his just severity. *“And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city.”* The night is the season of alarm and of danger. As the gloom thickens, every object wears a portentous aspect. Its solemnity deepens the cloud of affliction; and throws a darker shade over sorrow itself. It is the time for awful deeds. Then the murderer stalks abroad to destroy; and his “feet are swift to shed blood.” Then the adulteress spreads her toils to insnare. Then violence is prepared to “smite with the fist of wickedness;” and the thief treads softly, that he may “break through and steal.” Then the sinner hastens to iniquity, in imaginary security under the covert of midnight, and says, in the ignorance and presumption of his heart, “Tush! God doth not see!” It was at night that the destroying angel passed through Egypt to slay the first-born: at night, that the sword of the Lord penetrated the camp of Assyria, and destroyed a hundred and eighty-five thousand men: at night, that the shadow of a hand wrote on the wall of Belshazzar’s palace, the departure of his kingdom, the close of his glories, and of his life together, and the scrutiny of justice, with its perilous consequences. But the day has ever been regarded as the season of security. The first ray of the morning chases the phantoms of the imagination, and terminates the horrors of fancy. Light discovers real peril, and bears with it the means of escape. When the day breaks upon us, it scatters peace, and joy, and safety, in its smiles. Ah, how little do we know where danger lurks, and when the dream of

happiness shall be broken! Sodom escapes the perils of the night, to fall by unexpected vengeance in the morning! "*And while he lingered*"—who that had a heart to feel, and connexions to relinquish, could refrain?—"while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the LORD being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city." A gentle constraint is laid upon him, to snatch him from ruin. It is thus that we feel a divine power gently attracting us from the world to the cross: we are drawn with the cords of love: no violence is imposed upon our will in leading us from the paths of death: but we feel and acknowledge, that it is HE, "who worketh in us to will and to do his own good pleasure." It is thus, when our wandering hearts "follow lying vanities, and forsake their own mercies," that God sends some gentle and salutary affliction, to chastise our folly, and to bring our spirit home to its rest. "*And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life; look not behind thee neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed.*" Judgment once awakened is not always directed to discriminate characters; and the righteous are sometimes permitted to suffer in the general calamity. It is not safe to dwell in the tents of sin; and those who take up their abode in the tabernacles of the wicked, must be content to share their portion, and their punishment—at least, in the present life. Nothing short of a total separation from them can afford security: for to linger on the plain is as hazardous as to tarry in the city. "*And Lot said unto them, Oh, not so, my Lord.*" In the very midst of danger, and while the cloud of ruin hangs over his head, self-willed man cannot refrain from opposing his opinions to the arrangements of Deity; and it must be "according to his mind," or he will scarcely be satisfied with his deliverance. "*Behold, now, thy servant hath found grace in thy sight*"—should he, therefore, presume? "*and thou hast magnified thy mercy, which though hast showed unto me in saving my life;* should he not therefore be satisfied? Is the goodness of God a reason why he should tempt his forbearance? "*and I cannot escape to the mountain*"—why not? What shall hinder, when God leads the way? what can successfully oppose, when he commands? "*lest some evil take me, and I die!*" O thou of little faith! wherefore didst thou doubt? Was not HE, who led thee forth from the midst of a people given over to utter desolation; strong to deliver? Was he not able to preserve thee? And had he not given a tacit pledge of security, in the very command which he issued? "*Behold, now,*



*this city is near to flee unto, and it is a little one*”—it is a small request that I prefer, in comparison with the unsolicited mercy which thou hast already manifested; or it is a little city, and may well be spared in so wide and general a destruction as thine offended justice meditates—“*Oh, let me escape thither, (is it not a little one?) and my soul shall live.*” What is the punishment which awaits the man who dares to lift his little plans to a competition with the wisdom of Deity? Let us adore the long-suffering of God! Heaven lends a gracious ear to this supplication; “and he said unto him, *See, I have accepted thee concerning this thing also, that I will not overthrow this city, for the which thou hast spoken.*” How consistent is this with the character of God, who delighteth to have mercy, and to forgive! Lot had a high gratification in seeing this little object of his compassion escape the devastation of its vicinity, if benevolence urged his plea: but if selfishness dictated it, as the narrative seems to insinuate, he was greatly disappointed; for although his request was granted, his terror suffered him not to derive from it the advantage which he proposed: since he afterwards abandoned the retreat which he had chosen, and fled to the mountain, whither God had at first directed him, “for he feared to dwell in Zoar.” “*Haste thee, escape thither;*” thy presence disarms my wrath, and withholds my righteous vengeance: “*for I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither.*” Behold the value and importance of one righteous man! It was the lip of infallible truth, which said of his disciples—“Ye are the salt of the earth!” “*Therefore,*” in remembrance of the successful plea of Lot, “*the name of the city was called Zoar;*” which signifies *little*, and relates to the argument which its intercessor used. Most of the names, given to persons, and to things, in the scriptures, bear a reference to some signal circumstances, more nearly, or remotely, connected with them.

“*The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar.*” This calm is perfectly natural, and agrees with almost every account transmitted to us, of tempests, earthquakes, and great convulsions of nature. We know that the wind usually falls, and that there is a profound serenity diffused over the atmosphere, before a storm. The former part of that day, in which Lisbon was destroyed by an earthquake, was uncommonly fine; and the danger was not even apprehended, till an unusual subterraneous noise, and a slight trembling of the ground, preceded, for a few moments, the first great shock which almost levelled the whole city. This same agitation of the earth was almost universal, and extended nearly over the whole globe, and in every place where it was felt, the same tranquillity was observed to reign, before the calamity was

endured. This calm, however, is unspeakably dreadful! Who can read this single verse without shuddering? As the destruction was unexpected, it was the more terrible! and as it was sudden, it admitted of no escape. The sons-in-law of Lot mocked his admonitions; and they were roused to a sense of their importance and truth, only by the hand of death. Let this consideration prepare us for a still greater event, in the solemnities of which we must all participate; and which will be equally sudden and unexpected: for "as it was in the days of Lot, even so shall the coming of the Son of man be!"

*"Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomprrah, brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven; and he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground."* Some commentators translate the words "brimstone and fire," *brimstone inflamed*; and the interpretation which they build upon this translation is, that brimstone inflamed, in the Hebrew style of writing, signifies neither more nor less, than lightning. It is reasonable to conclude, that this lightning penetrated so far into the veins of bitumen, with which these plains are known to be impregnated, as to enkindle the combustible matter; which would quickly communicate its heat and flame to the cities, and to the whole country, more entirely and expeditiously than the lava of a burning mountain lays waste the lands over which it flows: and after consuming all that was capable of such a destruction, formed the heavy, fetid, unwholesome lake, called the Dead Sea, from its wide expansion, and the stillness of its waters. Justin observes, respecting this sea, that it cannot be moved by the winds, by reason of the large quantity of bitumen immersed in it; which also renders it incapable of being navigated. The same remark will not be found to apply to the same sea in the present day; as we have instances of some modern travellers having ventured to bathe in it: but this also may be accounted for on the same principle; the diminution of the bitumen; which is continually removed, by persons on the spot, as it emerges from this singular lake. Neither is it true, that no bird will adventure to stretch his wing across it, as some ancient writers have asserted; for many have been observed to sport along its dreary banks: but the salt with which it is impregnated is inimical to vegetation; its waves retain a sufficient degree of malignity to endanger the health of those who are rash enough to plunge into its unnatural waters; and it retains a sufficient degree of desolation, to justify the description of the destruction suggested in the present Lecture; and to confirm the general account of antiquity,

making a reasonable allowance for the alterations which time may be supposed to have effected.

“*But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.*” A learned writer\* observes, “The sulphureous storm did not begin to fall upon Sodom, till Lot was safely arrived at Zoar. But his wife looked back *before* he reached Zoar: for she looked back *from behind him*, as he was going to Zoar. When she looked back, Sodom and its plains appeared as pleasant as before. She looked back with affection to the place, and regret at leaving it: according to the import of the original word.† This implied unbelief.” She wavered—“she stopped by the way, and left her husband to go by himself”—in the fluctuations of her mind, “she would proceed no farther; and might be at a considerable distance from Zoar, and so near to Sodom, as, probably, to be involved in the terrible shower, and thereby turned into a nitro-sulphureous pillar:”—or at least to be suffocated by it, and incrustated with it. “This gives proper force to our Lord’s admonition, *Remember Lot’s wife.*‡ Let the judgment of God upon *her*, warn *you* of the folly and danger of hankering after, and being loath to part with, small and temporal things, when your life and happiness, the greatest and most lasting concerns, are at stake.”

We lead you forwards to another branch of evidence:

## II. THE TESTIMONY OF ANCIENT WRITERS.

It is asserted by Tacitus, that the traces of the fire which consumed these cities were visible in his days. “At no great distance are those fields, which, as it is said, were formerly fruitful, and covered with great cities, till they were consumed by lightning: the vestiges of which remain in the parched appearance of the country, which has lost its fertility.”§

The testimony of Philo|| and of Pliny¶ accords with that of the Roman historian.

Diodorus Siculus describes the lake Asphaltites at large, in two different parts of his work; and concludes his account by saying, “The region round about burning with fire, exhales a stench so intolerable, that the bodies of the inhabitants are diseased, and their lives contracted.”\*\*\*

Strabo, in writing on the same subject, thus concludes: “There

\* Dr. Taylor, in his *Scheme of Scripture Divinity*: now out of print, but preserved in Bishop Watson’s Theological Tracts, Vol. I. chap. xxv. p. 106.

† נבט

‡ Luke xvii. 32.      § Tacit. Hist. lib. v.

¶ Plin. Hist. lib. v. cap. 16.

|| Philo de Vitâ Mosis.

\*\*\* Diod. Sic. lib. ii. et lib. xix.



are many indications that fire has been over this country: for about Masada they show rough and scorched rocks, and caverns in many places eaten in, and the earth reduced to ashes, and drops of pitch distilling from the rocks, and hot streams, offensive afar off, and habitations overthrown: which render credible, some reports among the inhabitants, that there were formerly thirteen cities on that spot, the principal of which was Sodom; so extensive as to be sixty furlongs in circumference; but that by earthquakes, and by an eruption of fire, and by hot and bituminous waters, it became a lake as it now is: the rocks were consumed, some of the cities were swallowed up, and others abandoned by those of the inhabitants who were able to escape.”\*

Similar to this is the language of Solinus. At a considerable distance from Jerusalem, a frightful lake extends itself, which has been struck by lightning, as is evident from the ground, black, and reduced to ashes.”† He goes on to relate the fable of the apples growing near it, which were said to appear fair to the eye, but to contain only sooty ashes, and upon being touched, to exhale into smoke, or to vanish into dust. The same fiction is mentioned also by Tacitus: but we must learn, in receiving the testimony of ancient historians, to distinguish between truth and fable, to separate the former from the latter, with which it is often found overwhelmed, to discriminate between the fact and the legend, to divide that which they saw, from that which they admitted only from tradition, to make allowance for their credulity, and impartially to weigh the evidence which they produce. Moses is not answerable for the fondness which they discovered for the marvellous, nor for the fables which tradition blended with his history. Neither is their account of that which they saw, to be rejected for the easy credit which they gave to that which they only heard, and heard from disputable authority. While the facts of the Mosaic history are confirmed, his superior purity, and consequently credibility, is established.

Among the moderns, Bisselius, in his treatise on illustrious ruins, and a great number of travellers, have described this singular lake. Maundrell, Volney, Pococke, Shaw, and other men of eminence, have communicated to the public the result of their observations.

Alexander Trallianus mentions a heathen form of exorcism, that confirms the scripture representation of the calamity which overtook Lot's wife. It runs thus—“In the name of God, who turned Lot's wife into a pillar of salt.”‡ We have yet to examine,

\* Strabo, lib. xvi.

† Solinus, cap. xxxvi. edit. Salmasianæ.

‡ Dodd. Lect. part. VI. Prop. cix. Demon. 7, page 294, quarto edition. Con-

## III. THE EVIDENCES REMAINING ON THE SPOT.

We remark,

1. THE APPEARANCE OF THE LAKE, AND OF THE SURROUNDING COUNTRY, HAS BEEN VERY SIMILAR IN EVERY AGE. It has carried the same mournful vestiges of destruction. Not only do the respective testimonies of ancient writers agree with each other, but the several subsequent representations of this fact, given in the Bible, accord entirely with the Mosaic history: a decisive proof that the spot has carried the same features of ruin from the first; and a pleasing evidence that the sacred writings preserve the most perfect harmony with themselves. A selection of a few passages, written at various and distinct periods, will exhibit the appearances of these desolated cities, as they presented themselves to the different writers; and will furnish a coincidence and concord which truth alone can produce. It is worthy consideration, that, in these several passages, appeals are made to this fact as an event well known, and a subject on which the world were, at that time, able to obtain ample satisfaction, by visiting, and considering, the spot itself. Moses refers the Israelites of his day, to the appearance which these wasted plains then presented, as an image of what their own possessions would become, if they disobeyed the commands of God. He threatens—"The generation to come of your children that shall rise up after you, and the stranger that shall come from a far land, shall say, when they see the plagues of that land, and the sicknesses which the LORD hath laid upon it; and that the whole land thereof is *brimstone, and salt, and burning, that it is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth therein*, LIKE THE OVERTHROW OF SODOM, AND GOMORRAH, ADMAH, AND ZEOIM, WHICH THE LORD OVERTHREW IN HIS ANGER, AND IN HIS WRATH: even all the nations shall say, Wherefore hath the LORD done thus unto this land? what meaneth the heat of this great anger? Then men shall say, Because they have forsaken the covenant of the LORD GOD of their fathers, which he made with them when he brought them forth out of the land of Egypt."\* When Babylon is threatened, another appeal is made to this event, as to a fact well known, and indisputably authenticated. Isaiah proclaims her fall, and this is her awful sentence: Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be AS WHEN GOD OVERTHREW SODOM AND GOMORRAH. It shall *never be inhabited*, neither shall it be dwelt in from genera-

sult Grot. de Verit. Sect. xvi. in note. See also, for the whole of these quotations, note 3, at the end of this Lecture.

\* Deut. xix. 22—25

tion to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there, neither shall the shepherds make their fold there.”\* Jeremiah beheld the same face of things, when he made these ruins prefigure the downfall of Edom. “Edom shall be a desolation: every one that goeth by it shall be astonished, and shall hiss at all the plagues thereof. AS IN THE OVERTHROW OF SODOM AND GOMORRAH, and the neighbouring cities thereof, saith the LORD, no man shall abide there, *neither shall the son of man dwell in it.*”† Jesus, who is Truth itself, appeals to the same desolation, and to all its circumstances, as an image of his own visitation of the Jewish nation.—“As it was in the days of Lot: they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it RAINED FIRE AND BRIMSTONE FROM HEAVEN, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed. In that day, he which shall be upon the house top,‡ and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back. REMEMBER LOT’S WIFE!”§ The apostle Peter, in the passage read at the commencement of this Lecture, admits this fact into the catalogue of divine judgments against iniquity; and represents the offended and insulted Deity, “TURNING THE CITIES OF SODOM AND GOMORRAH INTO ASHES, condemning them with an overthrow, and making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly.” While the writers of the scriptures thus strengthen one another, they evince that the same characteristic ruin has, through all ages, overspread the same country. We observe,

2. THERE REMAIN CORRESPONDENT FEATURES OF DESOLATION ON THE SPOT TO THIS DAY. It is readily admitted, that travellers who visit the country in question are liable to be deceived; and that in many instances the inhabitants of the surrounding regions have imposed upon them. Josephus has asserted that the pillar of salt was to be seen in his days, and that he actually saw it. It is disputable, how far this testimony may be received; not that we bring the charge of wilful misrepresentation against him, but that it is probable he was himself deceived. The same credulity which led him to admit the account of a sabbatical river, would easily induce him, visiting the lake, as he did, with a mind prepossessed in favour of some such monument of antiquity remaining, to mistake some rude, misshapen rock, for a crumbling fragment of the pillar of which

\* Is. xiii. 19, 20.

† Jer. xlix. 17, 18. L. 40.

‡ These houses had flat roofs, and an ascent to them on the outside: of course a person at the top would descend without entering the house.

§ Luke xvii. 28—32.



Moses speaks. Nevertheless, we think that the general features of the country, and particularly the lake, are standing memorials of this awful fact. Some, indeed, have denied that the cities stood upon this spot. But it must be admitted that the universal appearance of the land sanctions the common opinion, that here judgment was executed against the unrighteous inhabitants of Sodom. The description of the face of that unhappy country, given in the passages which we have quoted from the scriptures, and transcribed from ancient historians, accords well with the whole aspect of the vicinity of the Dead Sea. The country is stripped of herbage; the lake, and the soil, are salt and bituminous; and vegetable life seems extinct on all its borders. It would be difficult to fix upon any other spot in the known world, to which the principal features of the narrative would apply. It is to be supposed, from the uniform language of the Bible, that the destruction of these cities was to be a lasting monument of divine displeasure against their wickedness: consequently, that strong vestiges of their desolation should remain through every age. It is certain that all the ancient historians who have adverted at all to this singularly awful display of divine justice, have also fixed upon this place, as the theatre on which it was exhibited. It is no less remarkable, that all who have described this lake, and its vicinity, have connected with it a tradition, more or less explicit, respecting the destruction of the cities of the plain; and some of them were men to whom it is scarcely probable that the writings of Moses were accessible; and who must therefore have received the knowledge of the event through some other channel. May we not also reasonably suppose that some changes have been effected by time, which have considerably altered the aspect, and even the properties of the waters, since the ancient writers, whom we have quoted, visited this land of barren solitude? Time, which alters the whole globe, and overturns empires, would not spare the Dead Sea, and its deserted, naked shores! Jordan perpetually rolls his tide to this gulf: streams of fresh water are continually pouring into it: the Arabs diminish its salt, by draining its water into large pits near the lake, leaving it to be crystallized by the sun; and its bitumen is gathered by the same people, whose ingenuity applies it to many purposes, and who convert it into an article of commerce. We still think, that the spot manifests marked features of desolation at this hour: and the lake is said to be about thirty miles long, and ten miles broad.

Before this subject is entirely dismissed, permit us to make two remarks, which appear to arise out of it.

1. JUDGMENTS DELAYED WILL YET EVENTUALLY BE EXECUTED.

To other sins, the ungodly add *that* of presumption. Because serenity reigns over the face of the heavens, they apprehend no evil—they conclude that the tempest will never rise. When the cloud appears “like a man’s hand,” they flatter themselves that it will extend no farther. When you warn them of their danger, and foretell their approaching ruin, they regard you as “one that mocketh.” Even when the heavens are overspread with blackness, and the thunder of indignation begins to roll, they imagine that the storm will spend itself, and that the gloom will pass away. But the day will arrive when the Saviour shall appear “to be admired in them that believe,” and to return on the head of his adversaries the evil which they have devised against his dignity; and *that* day shall “burn as an oven.”\* In vain shall the unrighteous then cry for help, and seek a refuge from the wrath of the Judge. In vain shall they turn to the east, the west, the north, or the south, every where the sword of justice meets their eye—every where the tribunal of God rises before their sight—every where the clangour of the last trumpet assails their ears—and the grave itself forms no shelter from the gaze of Omnipotence! In vain shall they call upon the rocks to fall upon them, and the mountains to cover them: the earth and the heavens shall flee from the face of “Him that sitteth upon the throne.” “Now is the accepted time: behold, now is the day of salvation!”

2. SECURITY, IN EVERY SITUATION, BELONGS TO THE FRIENDS OF GOD. You have seen Noah floating securely on the bosom of a destroying flood, while the whole world perished. You have beheld Lot safely conducted out of Sodom, when the inhabitants of the plain, and the perverse scoffers of his own family, were consumed. What is the language of this dreadful event to the respective classes of mankind? To the “ungodly” it is saying—“Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish!” To you, who cast your eyes over these desolated plains, it cries—“Escape for your life”—flee to a refuge more secure than the mountain—and hide under the shadow of the cross! But what is its testimony respecting the people of God? “They shall not be afraid for the terror by night: nor for the arrow that flieth by day: nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness: nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday. A thousand shall fall at their side, and ten thousand at their right hand: but it shall not come nigh them! Only with their eyes shall they behold, and see the reward of the wicked.” The last storm which shall rise to blot out the sun, to extinguish the stars, to rend the sepulchre, and to raise the dead, shall waft them to an

\* See note 4, at the end of this Lecture.

everlasting kingdom. They shall meet the Lord in the air: they shall be changed into his image: they shall appear with him in glory.

O Christian, death is advancing to conduct thee home, to terminate thine afflictions, and to hide thee for ever from the storms of life! Even now the moment arrives! Hark—the trampling of the horses at the door—and the “chariot of fire” waits to bear thee to heaven!

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## NOTES.

NOTE 1.—Testimony to the fact that the Chaldeans worshipped fire, extracted from the works of the pious and eloquent Saurin.—“Voici un passage remarquable de Rufin\* touchant l'idolâtrie des Chaldéens: le témoignage de cet auteur est confirmé par celui de Suidas.†

“On dit que les Chaldéens portèrent autrefois le feu, qui étoit leur Dieu, par toutes les provinces, pour combattre avec toutes les autres divinités, afin que celle qui triompheroit dans ce combat fut censée la véritable. Les Dieux d'air, d'or, d'argent, de bois, et de pierre, étoient facilement consumés par le feu, qui avoit la supériorité par tout. Un sacrificateur de Canope s'avisa de cette ruse. Les Egyptiens ont certains vases de terre qui ont de petites ouvertures de tous côtés, et qui sont destinés à filtrer l'eau du Nil. Il remplit d'eau un de ces vases: il en ferma toutes les ouvertures avec de la cire: il y attacha une tête qu'on disoit être celle de Ménélas, et il l'érigea en Divinité. Les Chaldéens allumèrent du feu autour de ce vase, afin que ces deux Divinités combattissent ensemble. Mais le feu ayant aussitôt fondu la cire qui bouchoit l'ouverture de la cruche, il fut incontinent éteint par l'eau qui en sortit, et le sacrificateur de Canope remporta la victoire.

“Ce sont les paroles de Rufin.”

*Saur. Disc. sur la Bible, Tome I. disc. xi. p. 78.*

“There is a remarkable passage in Rufin respecting the idolatry of the Chaldeans: the testimony of this author is confirmed by that of Suidas:

“They say that the Chaldeans formerly carried fire, which was their god, through all the provinces, to contend with all the other divinities, that whoever conquered in this combat might be deemed the true one. The deities of air, of gold, of silver, of wood, and of stone, were easily consumed by the fire, which had the superiority over all. A priest of Canopus bethought himself of this stratagem. The Egyptians had certain vases of earth, which had little apertures on all sides, and which were designed to filtrate the water of the Nile. He filled one of these vases with the water: he closed all the holes of it with wax: he placed a head upon it, which was said to be that of Menelaus, and he exalted it to a divinity. The Chaldeans kindled the fire round his vase, that these two deities might contend together. But the fire having quickly melted the wax which covered the aperture of the pitcher, it was presently extinguished by the water which issued from it, and the priest of Canopus obtained the victory.”

“These are the words of Rufin.”

This quotation refers to page 117, of the preceding Lecture.

NOTE 2.—There is a singular coincidence between the language used by the Deity, in his conference with Abraham, and the words which Ovid puts into the mouth of his Jupiter. In the one case, it is to be considered altogether as a figure of speech, for the Deity could obtain no additional information, by descending in a human form: in the latter instance, the poet speaks in exact conformity to

\* Rufin Hist. Eccl. Lib. II. cap. xxvi. p. 202.

† Suidas sur le mot *Canopus*. Tom. I. p. 239.



the ideas which the heathens entertained of the limited knowledge of their divinities. We will lay the passages together.

MOSES.

“And the LORD said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous; I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know.”—*Gen. xviii.* 20, 21.

OVID.

*Contigerat nostras infamia temporis aures :  
Quam cupiens falsam, summo delabor Olympo,  
Et Deus humana lustru sub imagine terras.*

*Ovid. Met. lib. i.* 211—213.

*The INFAMY of the times had REACHED OUR EARS: WISHING it might be FALSE, I DESCENDED from high OLYMPUS, and, a god, I passed through the earth UNDER A HUMAN FORM.*

These remarks apply to page 120, of the preceding Lecture.

NOTE 3.—The several testimonies collected from different ancient writers, respecting the lake Asphaltites and its vicinity, with the traditions of its destruction by fire.

From TACITUS:—“Haud procul inde campi, quos ferunt olim uberes magnisque urbibus habitatos, fulminum jactu arsisse: et manere vestigia, terramque specie torridam, vim frugiferam perdidisse.”

*Tacit. Hist. lib. v.*

Translated in page 131, of the preceding Lecture.

From DIODORUS SICULUS. Ο δὲ πλησίον τόπος, ἔμπυρος ἦν καὶ δυσώδης, ποιεῖται τὰ σώματα τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐπίνοσα, καὶ παντελῶς ὀλιγοχρόνια.

*Diod. Sic. lib. ii.*

Ο' δὲ πλησίον τόπος, ἔμπυρος ἦν, καὶ δυσώδης, ποιεῖ τὰ σώματα τῶν περιου-  
κνηλων ἐπίνοσα καὶ παντελῶς ὀλιγοχρόνια.

*Diod. Sic. lib. xix.*

Translated in page 131, of the preceding Lecture.

From STRABO. Τὰ δὲ ἔμπυρον, τὴν χάραν εἶναι τὰ ἄλλα τεκμηρία φέρουσι πολλά· καὶ γὰρ πέτρας τινὰς ἐπικικαυμένας δεικνύουσι τραχείας περὶ Μασάδα, καὶ σύριγγας πολλαχῶς, καὶ γῆν τε φερώδη, σιγαλόνας τε πίσης ἐκ λισσάδων λειβομένης, καὶ δυσώδεις πάρωθεν ποταμούς ζέοντας, καλοικίας δὲ ἀναίετρα-  
μένης σποράδην ὥστε πιστεύειν τοῖς θρυλλομένοις ὑπὸ τῶν ἐγχωρίων, ὡς ἄρα ὠκευλὸ πόλε τρεῖς καὶ δέκα πόλεις ἐν ἡλύδῃ, ἣν τῆς μητροπόλεως Σοδόμων σώζοιτο κύκλος ἐξηκοντὴ πρὸ σταδίων ὑπὸ σεισμῶν τε καὶ ἀναφυστημάτων πρὸς καὶ θερ-  
μων ὑδάτων ἀσφαλιδῶν τε καὶ θειωδῶν ἡ λίμνη προπέσοι καὶ πέτραι πυριληπτοὶ γενοιντο· αἱ τε πολεῖς αἱ μὲν καταποδεῖν, ἃς δὲ ἐκλείπειν οἱ δυνάμενοι φυγεῖν.

*Strabo, lib. xvi.*

Translated in page 132, of the preceding Lecture.

From SOLINUS. Longo ab Hierosolymis recessu tristis sinus panditur, quem de cælo tactum testatur humus nigra et in cinerem soluta. Duo ibi oppida, Sodoma nominatum alterum, alterum Gomorrum.”

*Solinus, cap. xxxvi. edit. Salmasianæ.*

Translated in page 132, of the preceding Lecture.

Many travellers bear a testimony to the unhealthfulness of the air about the lake: the monks who live in the neighbourhood, would have dissuaded Dr. Pococke

from bathing in these singular waters: he ventured in, however, and was, two days after, seized with a dizziness, and violent pain in the stomach, which lasted nearly three weeks, and which they imputed to his rashness; nor does he contradict them.

NOTE 4.—The day of judgment is a doctrine of Christianity: yet is it worthy of remark, that the heathens cherished some vague opinions, and held some uncertain traditions, that the earth, and the orbs around us, are to be consumed by fire, as the following extracts will prove.

—————Sic, cùm compage soluta  
 Secula tot mundi suprema cœgerit hora,  
 Antiquum repetent iterum chaos omnia; mixtis  
 Sidera sideribus concurrent: ignea pontum  
 Astra petent: tellus extendere litora nolet,  
 Executietque fretum: fratri contraria Phoebe  
 Ibit, et obliquum bigas agitare per orbem  
 Indignata, diem poscet sibi: totaque discors  
 Machina divulsi turbabit fœdera mundi.

*Lucan. Phars. lib. i. v. 72—80, p. 13 & 14. edit. Ouden-*  
*dorpii, 1728. 4to.*

When fate commands the final hour,  
 And conqu'ring Time's resistless power  
 Dissolves creation's frame:

Stars mix'd with stars shall vainly try,  
 In ocean's boundless waves, to fly  
 The universal flame.

The land no more shall guard the sea,  
 The moon shall strive to rule the day,  
 The shatter'd sphere shall burn:

The whole machine to ruin hurl'd,  
 Discord shall triumph o'er the world,  
 And chaos shall return.

“Sidera sideribus incurrent, et omni flagrante materia, uno igne, quicquid nunc ex disposito lucet, ardebit.”

*Seneca, fine ad Marciam.*

*Stars shall rush upon stars: every thing material shall be consumed; and whatever now shines in order, shall perish in one common fire!*

Ovid represents his Jupiter, when resolved to punish the earth, choosing water, and checking his thunder, for the following reason:

Sed timuit, ne forte sacer tot ab ignibus æther,  
 Conciperet flammæ, longusque ardesceret axis.  
 Esse quoque in fati reminiscitur, affore tempus,  
 Quo mare, quo tellus, correptaue regia cœli  
 Ardeat; et mundi moles operosa laboret.

*Ovid. Met. lib. i. 254—258.*

He stopt for fear, thus violently driv'n,  
 The sparks should catch his axle-tree of heaven.  
 Rememb'ring in the fates, a time when fire  
 Should to the battlements of heav'n aspire,  
 And all his blazoning worlds above should burn,  
 And all th' inferior globe to cinders turn.

*DRYDEN.—Garth's Ovid. b. i. l. 346—350.*

This note is referred to in page 136, of the preceding Lecture.

## LECTURE VI.

## HISTORY OF JOSEPH.

## GENESIS XLIX. 22—26.

Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall: The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him: But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob; (from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel:) Even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee; and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee with the blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts, and of the womb: The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of thy progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills: they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren.

## ACTS VII. 9—16.

And the patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt: but God was with him, and delivered him out of all his afflictions, and gave him favour and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh, king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt and all his house. Now there came a dearth over all the land of Egypt and Canaan, and great affliction: and our fathers found no sustenance. But when Jacob heard that there was corn in Egypt, he sent out our fathers first. And at the second time Joseph was made known to his brethren; and Joseph's kindred was made known unto Pharaoh. Then sent Joseph, and called his father Jacob to him, and all his kindred, threescore and fifteen souls. So Jacob went down into Egypt, and died, he, and our fathers, and were carried over into Sychem, and laid in the sepulchre that Abraham bought for a sum of money of the sons of Emmor, the father of Sychem.

To enter at large into the beautiful history that connects the preceding Lecture with the subject which we are about to propose for consideration, is not practicable; we must, therefore, imitate travellers in a foreign country, whose limited time will not permit them to pass through the land in the length and the breadth of it—we must inquire what things are most worthy our regard, and to them bend our attention. There are two events previous to THE HISTORY OF JOSEPH, which require us to pause, and to indulge the common feelings of nature, and which cannot fail to impress, because they speak at once to the heart. It is impossible to pass through Canaan without turning aside to the land of Moriah, and contemplating



the sacred mountain on which a patriarch's faith triumphed over a father's feelings. According to the promise of God, Isaac was born when Abraham was a hundred years old. He had seen his son preserved from the perils of infancy. His mother had gazed with unspeakable pleasure upon her child—the son of her vows, who was now fast pressing towards manhood. The parents of this amiable youth were looking forwards to peaceful dismissal from the toils of life, and to the happy termination of a tranquil old age. Abraham “planted a grove in Beersheba,” and rested under its shadow. This quiet retreat, alas, is not impervious to sorrow! This delightful serenity resembles the stillness of the air which usually precedes a tempest—it bodes approaching trial. “And it came to pass, after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him—Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah: and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I shall tell thee of.”—What a command was this! To stain his hand with the blood of a lamb which he had fed, would be a task to a feeling mind: but the requisition is for a “Son.” To select one from a numerous family, would be a cruel effort. Let the mother look round upon her children, when they are assembled before her like a flock, and say, which she could spare from among them? But the demand is, “take thine *only* son”—in whom the life of both parents is bound up. To part with an only child for a season, opens the fountain of a mother's tears, and adds to the gray hairs of his father. To lose him by death, is to cause them to go bitterly in the anguish of their soul all their days. What was it, then, to offer an only son as a sacrifice, and to be himself the priest who should plunge the knife into his bosom? But he obeys—obeys without a murmur! He rises early in the morning to immolate his child, and to offer, on the altar of God, all that he held most dear in this world. On the third day, the destined mountain marks its elevation along the line of the horizon, and meets the eye of the afflicted parent. The servants are not permitted to witness the awful scene, the solemnity of which they might disturb by lamentations—or the execution of which they might prevent by force—or, wanting their master's faith, might draw from it inferences unfavourable to religion. At this moment, to awaken in his bosom extreme torture, “Isaac spake unto Abraham his father and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold, the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt-offering? And Abraham said, My son, God shall provide himself a lamb for a burnt-offering: so they went both of them together.”—But we will no longer at-

tempt to scent the violet, and to paint the rainbow. We must draw a veil over the scene: for who can enter into a father's anguish as he raised his hand against his child? and who shall be bold enough to attempt a description of his rapture, when Heaven, which had put his faith to so severe a trial, commanded him to forbear, and, indeed, provided itself a victim?

Before we enter upon the immediate subject of this evening's discussion, humanity requires us to drop a tear, also, over the grave of the once lovely Sarah, who "died in Kirjath-arba." Twelve years after the trial of his faith, this heavy stroke of calamity fell upon him; "and Abraham came to mourn for Sarah, and to weep for her."—Let not the unfeeling, and the gay break in upon the sacred privacy of domestic sorrow! It is not the semblance of grief; which spreads a cloud over the forehead of yonder venerable patriarch: real and unaffected anguish causes those tears to flow. She had been long the companion of his life—she had shared his joys and sorrows—she had sojourned in tents with him, a stranger in a strange land—she had regarded him with fondness up to her hundred and twenty-seventh year. Her communion and friendship had sweetened his distresses, and lightened his labours. The dissolving of this long connexion was loosening the fibres which entwined about his heart; and while he exhibited the resignation of a saint, he felt as a man. Before "the cave of the field of Machpelah" closes its mouth for ever upon the precious dust, let the young and the beautiful come, and look, for the last time, upon the person whose loveliness had kindled desire in every bosom, and had more than once ensnared her husband. Let them gaze upon the dishonour of that cheek, which even time had respected, and age had spared. Let them learn a lesson of humility, while they behold the triumphs of death, and hear a husband entreating "a possession of a burying place, that he may bury his dead out of his sight," and hide *that* form from his eyes, which he had never before beheld but with rapturous delight!

We pass over the events which occupied the few remaining years of the life of Abraham, and the interesting account of the marriage of Isaac. We leave his two sons, to bury in the grave of their father their mutual animosities; and we commit the dust of that patriarch in silence to rest by the side of his beloved Sarah, till the morning of the resurrection. We pass over the life of Isaac, whose disposition, according with the kind dispensations of Providence, led him to prefer the tranquillity of domestic life to the noise of state, and to the applause of fame; and who was "a plain man, dwelling in tents." In the bosom of his family, old age stole

upon him, and he heard the voice of years calling him to rest with his father Abraham. The fraud of Jacob, and the sanguinary disposition of Esau, must alike be overlooked; nor can we pause to comment upon that, which might furnish so much instruction—the sad consequences of the deception which he practised upon his father. Sin necessarily brings with it its own punishment; and it made even this favoured child an alien from his father's house, and worse than a servant in the family of an avaricious, unfeeling, unprincipled relation. His mother, whose partiality to him projected and executed the plan for which they both suffered so much in the event, advised him to flee into Mesopotamia, and to “tarry for a few days with his uncle Laban, till his brother's fury should turn away.” Alas! more than twenty years elapsed, while he was a sojourner at Padan-aram; and, when he returned to the tent of his father, the maternal anxieties and sorrows of Rebekah, were buried with her, deep, and silent, in the dust of death! We must drop these instructive records, and meet Jacob restored to his father, just in time to close his eyes; and, regarding him henceforward but as the father of Joseph, we must bring forwards so much of his history only, as is interwoven with the life and trials of his beloved son.

Rachel had said, “Give me children, or else I die!” How little do we know when our petitions are profitable to us, and when they will prove injurious, if answered in our own way! Not through the rejection, but in the fulfilment, of her desire—Rachel dies! *That* pillar, which solicits the eye of the traveller in the way to Ephrath, tells a mournful story. It says, ‘that the hand of affection elevated it, as a memorial of departed joys, to point out the spot where a husband lost the delight of his eyes, taken away at a stroke: that a mother was slain upon her bed by the accomplishment of her wish: that the cup of anticipated pleasure was dashed from her pale lips before she tasted its sweetness; and that the man-child so long desired as the summit of her earthly ambition, was named, as her soul was in departing, BENONI!’ This is its sad inscription, and this is the grave of the mother of Joseph!

Introduced under those circumstances, how interesting he appears to every feeling mind! A child robbed of his mother, excites universal commiseration, and commands affection from every bosom. We look forwards with anxiety to every future period of his life: and our prayers, and our hopes, attend every step of his journey. We mingle our tears with his, on the grave of her, whose maternal heart has ceased to beat: for we feel that he is be-



reaved of the friend and guide of his youth! His father would, but cannot, supply her loss. In vain the whole circle of his friendships blend their efforts to alleviate his sorrows, and to fill the place occupied by departed worth: a mother must be missed every moment, by a child who has ever known, and rightly valued one, when she sleeps in the grave. No hand feels so soft as hers—no voice sounds so sweet—no smile is so pleasant! Never shall he find again in this wide wilderness, such sympathy, such fondness, such fidelity, such tenderness, as he experienced from his mother! The whole world are moved with compassion for that motherless child: but the whole world cannot supply her place to him!—And, to interest your feelings, you are first made acquainted with Joseph, at a period when he had lost the smile, and the superintendence, of his mother!

The history of his life opens upon us, also, when he was of an age to command affection, and to excite solicitude. “Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brethren.” A youth of seventeen is placed in delicate, and dangerous, circumstances: he feels new passions and desires; he is assailed by new scenes and temptations: he is entering the most perilous path of life, with an immature judgment, a vivid and deceptive imagination, a mind inexperienced and impressible; and his whole life will be deeply affected by the habits which he forms, and the principles which he assumes, at this early period. He, who has weathered the storms, and experienced the wiles of life, feels much solicitude for the unsuspecting youth in taking this first step, which may, perhaps, for ever afterwards, decide his character. The selection of his society is an important concern: he will be moulded into their image, and will be deeply influenced by their example. Joseph associated with his brethren; and it is fit, it is desirable, that “brethren should dwell together in unity;” but experience teaches, that brethren are not always the most suitable companions for each other: too much is frequently expected on both sides, of compliance, submission, or attention, and the bonds of peace are broken asunder. Something like this, appears to have been the case in the family of Jacob: for “the lad was with the sons of Bilhah, and with the sons of Zilpah, his father’s wives: and Joseph brought unto his father their evil report.” In this one instance, he does not appear in the most amiable light: for, in every point of view, a tale-bearer is an odious, and a dangerous person.

“Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colours.” Here lies the secret spring of all the subsequent afflictions,

both of the parent, and of the child! Could any thing excuse parental partiality, the reasons alleged would do it: but it is not to be excused; and he, who would keep his best beloved safely, must not make it known that he *is* the best beloved: for it is a piece of injustice, which nature, in the bosom of a brother, will never pardon. And the fond father must publish his weakness, by bestowing a mark of superior affection upon his darling boy, which would always meet the eye of his brethren, and never could be seen without exciting the worst of passions! Ah, Jacob! what, are all the sufferings of thy younger life forgotten? Did not parental partiality drive thee from the shadow of a father's tent, and the embraces of a mother's arms, to want and to servitude? Yet all the afflictions which he endured in the service of Laban, and all that he apprehended from the murderous sword of Esau: all that he feared, and all that he felt; had not guarded his heart against the very weakness which had caused all his troubles. The result was, what might have been expected—"When his brethren saw that his father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him." When a parent feels, and discovers, partiality to any one child above another, he himself is the cause of all the evil that shall arise, to wound his own peace, to render the object of his affection unamiable, to burst asunder the bonds of fraternal unity, to destroy domestic harmony, and to promote discord, strife, envy, and "every evil work."

God—who "speaketh once, yea, twice, yet man perceiveth it not;" who, "in a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed, openeth their ears, and sealeth their instruction"—foretold to Joseph, in two separate, yet similar dreams, his future greatness. Before the canon of scripture was completed, divine signs were made known in some more immediate channels; and such methods of communication, as those mentioned in this book, were frequent, before a written revelation was given, because they were necessary.

With more of honest simplicity, and of childish exultation, than of wisdom, and of prudence, he related these dreams, and the rancour, which already corroded fraternal affection, was increased in the bosom of his envious brethren. They fed their flocks at a distance from home, and it is probable had been absent some days, when the affectionate heart of Jacob yearned to know of their welfare. He resolved to send Joseph, to bear to them a parent's inquiries, and a parent's blessing. He could not but have seen their smothered dislike to this amiable youth; he had surely heard their half-suppressed murmurings: and, no doubt, he marked them with

fear and concern. It is not impossible that he reflected upon himself, for having, by his conduct, excited the ferment, which he was now anxious to allay; and, perhaps, he said in his heart—‘By sending my child to inquire after their welfare, and making him the servant of their convenience, I shall wipe away their evil impressions against him, and convince them of my regard for *them*.’ Little did he know the extent of the mischief which his partiality had effected; and as little did he appear to understand, that “a brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city!”

Behold, this lad in whom all his father’s affections centre, setting out from the vale of Hebron! Already have the trembling lips of Jacob pronounced, “God be gracious to thee, my son!”—and now his aged eyes are following him in his way to Shechem. Did no presentiment of evil shake his heart with unusual fears, when his faltering tongue said, “farewell?” Yonder youth, lightly treading the ground, and gaily pursuing the path which led him from his father’s tent for ever, and from his father’s presence for twenty-three years, apprehends no approaching ill. And although his enemies are cruel as death, there is ONE above, who shall deliver him from all their malice.

Wandering from place to place, his weary feet draw nigh to Dothan; and lo, those whom he seeks are there, watching his approach. Did not his heart leap for joy, when he saw, once more, faces which he knew, and brethren whom he loved? With sentiments far different do they gaze upon the lively hope of their father’s old age! “And when they saw him afar off, even before he came near unto them, they conspired against him to slay him.” Ungrateful, and unnatural, that they were! They could see a parent’s failings—but could not recognise his kindness! In the person of that beautiful youth, they only saw the favourite of their father: envy had so blinded their eyes, that they did not discover in him, a brother—“bone of their bone, and flesh of their flesh.”

How does one vice lead the way to another! The man who cherishes one evil passion cannot say where it will end! He, who begins a course of iniquity, cannot draw the line, and say, “Thus far will I go, but no farther!” The brethren of Joseph first admitted envy into their bosoms. After lying long, and being cherished there, it generated the thought of bloodshed; and the minds that entertained without pity the idea of murder, easily contrived a lie to impose upon their abused father. “And they said one to another, Behold, this dreamer cometh. Come now, therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit; and we will say some evil beast hath devoured him: and we shall see what will become of his dreams!”



Remorseless, and abandoned, as was this band of ruffians, (for who can pollute the sacred name of *brethren* by applying it to murderers?) it appears that amongst them there was *one*, in whom the flame of duty, and affection, was not wholly extinguished. Reuben, retained in his bosom a small portion of respect for his venerable and tried parent, of love to his innocent brother, of the common feelings of humanity; and he counselled them not to kill him, but to deposite him in some pit; secretly intending to deliver him from their hands, and to restore him to his father.

There is one thing worthy your attention, and which renders their conduct the more cruel and unjust, that, whatever might be the partiality of Jacob, Joseph does not appear to have assumed any thing in consequence of it, nor to have carried himself towards his brethren with insolence. For aught that appears on the sacred page, he seems ever to have treated them with the utmost affection, and to have borne his exaltation, in his father's family, with meekness.

They stripped him of his coat, and having cast him into a pit, "sat down to eat bread!" At this moment, a company of Ishmaelites passed by. And Judah said, "What *profit* is it if we slay our brother? come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites!"—Who does not blush to be a partaker of human nature?—of that nature, which could coldly join the purpose of murder with satisfying the common cravings of hunger—and not only unite the sacred name of brother with the design of reducing *that* brother to the condition of a slave—but, to make the frightful picture complete, added to all the rest the insatiable claims of avarice, and consulted which method of disposing of their own "flesh" would bring them the most "*profit!*"—Surely, in these bosoms nothing human was left undestroyed!—To this vile proposal the brethren consented, (one only being absent;) and they sold their brother to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver. The absent brother returned in an agony from the pit whence the child was taken, and lamented his loss, with feelings worthy of him, and with a sincerity that will one day shield him from the pangs of conscience, which those unrelenting bosoms shall feel.

It now remained, that they should complete their purpose, and finish their unnatural plan, by deceiving their too confiding father, and by persuading him, that his beloved child was devoured by some wild beast. This was accordingly done. A kid was killed, and the fatal pledge of parental affection dyed in blood.

I see the venerable old man waiting at the door of his tent for the return of his beloved boy! He says to himself—'Several hours

have elapsed since he departed! he might have returned long ere now! The shadows of the evening are falling fast! He will be bewildered in his path! Why is he so long in coming? Surely he is safe!—Now he walks a little way from the door of his tent to meet him; and his eyes, far more active than his feet, cast many a wishful, anxious look, towards Shechem. At length, a company is seen at a distance—his eager gaze impatiently examines them. ‘Yes’—he exclaims, with exultation—‘they *are* my sons’—and his heart leaps for joy! As they approach, all his fears, and anxieties, return with tenfold weight upon him. In vain he runs over the whole company with his eye, in search of the object of his affection—Joseph is not with them—and they draw near to confirm, too sadly confirm, his worst apprehensions! The blood-stained robe met the distracted sight of the wretched parent. Most probably, hypocrisy shrouded the countenance of these unnatural sons, with the borrowed mantle of seeming sorrow. Their tale of falsehood is told: the witness of their story appears in their hand; and the silence of grief, at length, gives way to the phrensy of despair.—‘It is my son’s coat’—he exclaims—“an evil beast hath devoured him! Joseph is, without doubt, rent in pieces.—And he refused to be comforted, and said, I will go down into the grave to my son, mourning!”

In the mean time, “Joseph was brought down to Egypt; and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him of the hands of the Ishmaelites.” Here the God of his father interfered, and was with the little Hebrew captive, and blessed his master for his sake. So conspicuously was the hand of Heaven seen in his house, and in all the concerns which he committed to his servant, that this man, although a stranger to God, noticed it, and had gratitude enough to reward it; and he left all that he had in Joseph’s hand; and he knew not aught he had, save the bread which he did eat.”

The hour of temptation is at hand. Prosperity is generally succeeded by trial. When thy day, my young friend, is unusually serene, expect a tempest to follow. I shall draw a veil over the scene of trial to which his purity was exposed: for it would ill become us to enforce even Joseph’s piety, at the expense of a blush from the cheek of modesty. All circumstances considered, the temptation was violent; and such as none but those, who, like Joseph, have the fear of God before their eyes, could have withstood. But his arguments were strong, and unanswerable: “How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?” This noble principle shall not go unrewarded. The righteous demands of religion

may for a season seem to expose us to danger: but the eye of God beholds integrity in the heart that cleaves to him, and the hand of God will recompense it.

By the tongue of falsehood, his master was prevailed upon to cast this injured and virtuous youth into prison. We pause one moment to mark here the overruling hand of Heaven. DEATH was the punishment inflicted upon those who were guilty of the crime of which he was accused; and here is the first interposition of God in reward of his innocence. Yet his lot was bitter; for he was immured in the king's prison, and "the iron entered into his soul."

Behold him reduced to the lowest ebb of fortune—"a stranger in a strange land"—shut out from liberty—denied to breathe the pure air of heaven—lying under the imputation of a detestable crime—and stripped of every thing, except that which the world's wealth cannot purchase, the testimony of a good conscience, and the presence and Spirit of God. Yet the hand of Deity is secretly working for him, both within, and without, the place of his confinement. To lighten his bondage, he now finds that favour in the eyes of the keeper of the prison, which he formerly found with Potiphar; and by the wise decisions of Providence, two of the principal servants of Pharaoh are sent to the same "house of bondage." Long had they not been under the same roof with Joseph, before the visions of the Almighty visited them; and two dreams predicted the restoration of the one to favour, and the termination of the hopes and fears of the other in death. With affectionate sympathy, Joseph inquired why the cloud of grief sat heavy on their countenances; and, upon the relation of their dreams separately, he gave to each, with fidelity, their interpretation. Upon the conviction that the chief butler was about to be restored to his office, he builds a hope that, through his instrumentality, he may once more be permitted to breathe the air, and see the light of heaven at large; and the sensibility with which he describes his former situation, and his present circumstances, while he entreats his fellow-prisoner to remember him, is so natural, and so pathetic, that none but a heart of stone can read his melancholy tale without feeling. "But think of me when it shall be well with thee, and show kindness, I pray thee, unto me; and make mention of me unto Pharaoh; and bring me out of this house. For, indeed, I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews: and here also have I done nothing that they should put me into the dungeon!"

Every thing took place precisely as he had predicted: "Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgot him." Such is the friendship of the world: it is founded in interest, and dissolved



for convenience. It is all promise; and he who relies upon it, will sit down in the bitterness of disappointment to deplore his folly. In the hour of affliction, when this man was a fellow-prisoner with Joseph, and was comforted by him, a transient emotion of affection for his "companion in tribulation" stirred in his bosom. Nature was not dead within him; and humanity pleaded for one so young, so kind, and so injured, as Joseph. A string of tenderness was touched in his heart: but, alas, its vibration ceased, and it relapsed into a state of rest, so soon as the hand which struck it was withdrawn. When he was exalted to power, and restored to prosperity, Joseph was left to pine amid all the horrors of solitary imprisonment, and to feel the pang inflicted by neglect.

At length, when hope deferred made the heart sick, the mercy of God interposed; and He, whose power is manifested to deliver in the moment of extremity, procured that enlargement for Joseph, which he had entreated from the friendship of the chief butler in vain. Pharaoh had two remarkable dreams, and was troubled: his own distress, on a similar occasion, rose before the eyes of the chief butler, and recalled Joseph with all his amiable qualities to his memory. "Then spake the chief butler unto Pharaoh, saying, I do remember my faults this day. Pharaoh was wroth with his servants, and put me in ward in the captain of the guard's house, both me and the chief baker. And we dreamed a dream in one night, I and he: we dreamed each man according to the interpretation of his dream. And there was there with us a young man, a Hebrew, servant to the captain of the guard; and we told him, and he interpreted to us our dreams: to each man according to his dream he did interpret. And it came to pass, as he interpreted to us, so it was: me he restored unto mine office, and him he hanged."

Joseph was brought before Pharaoh, in consequence of this representation; and having heard the dreams which had agitated and perplexed the king, he interpreted them as implying seven years of plenty and seven years of famine. God had given to this young man a wisdom more precious than all the treasures of Egypt; and Pharaoh had himself enough to value and reward it, where he beheld it blended with integrity and worth. He stepped at once from a prison to a throne; and passed, from the menial office of servant to the captain of the guard, to the second chariot, and to the second office, in the kingdom. At thirty years of age, Pharaoh constituted him governor of all Egypt. All elevations are dangerous: but those which are sudden, are of all others the most perilous. Joseph needed more grace, and more strength, to preserve him in his newly acquired dignities and honours, than to support him in his af-

flictions and persecutions. But He, whose hand conducted him to fame and to splendour, preserved his heart, that he was not insnared by them. He, who made him patient in tribulation, made him also faithful in prosperity.

By the management of this extraordinary young man during the years of plenty, enough was laid up in store to supply the whole kingdom, so long as the desolating scourge of famine was shaken over Egypt, and the adjacent countries. The history of Joseph, and the circumstances of this famine, are mentioned by Justin, in his abridgment of the history of Trogus Pompeius: in which, he has blended together, as is customary in traditions, that which is true, and that which is fabulous. He ascribes the knowledge of futurity which this favourite of Heaven possessed, to the exercise of magical arts—but you shall hear him speak for himself. The following is his language: “Among his brethren, Joseph, in point of age, was the youngest; and fearing the superiority of his genius, they surprised, and secretly sold him to foreign merchants, by whom he was carried into Egypt; where he exercised magical arts with singular ability, which rendered him much beloved by the king. For he was most sagacious in the solution of prodigies; and first found out the explanation of dreams: and nothing of divine, or of human wisdom, seemed to be concealed from him! So that he foresaw the sterility of the lands, many years before it took place; and all Egypt had perished by famine, had not the king, by his admonition, in a decree, commanded the fruits to be preserved many years. And such was his experience, that his answers seemed to be given by a God, rather than by a man.”\*—Such is the testimony of this writer.

The famine extending to the land of Canaan, the family of Jacob began to be in want. Poor old man! his sorrows thickened upon his head, at a time of life when nature demanded repose. Usually, after a stormy and rough day, in eventide there is light: but the lower his sun descended, the darker was the cloud which gathered upon it. A numerous family—age—infirmary—want—these are sad companions! What is to be done? Tidings have reached him, that there is corn in Egypt, and his sons are sent thither: but mindful of his loss, the patriarch retains Benjamin, the only pledge that remained to him of Rachel’s affection. And now is the divine pre-science made manifest! This knot of ruffians, whose eye had no pity, are to feel in their turn the roughness of unkindness; and they who sported with a brother’s tears, shall see “what will become of his dreams?” I am delighted to observe their embarrass-

\* Justin. lib. xxxvi. cap. 2. See note 1, at the end of this Lecture.

ment, and their fears, while they are treated as spies—and Benjamin is required—and Simeon is bound before their faces as a pledge of their return with their younger brother: and I love to listen to the language of their guilty, awakened consciences. They had slept for twenty years, and it is time they should be roused from their slumbers. “And they said one to another, We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us; and we would not hear: therefore, is this distress come upon us!”

They left Egypt for their father’s tent with heavy hearts, although they were supplied with corn for their immediate necessities; and their anxieties were not a little increased, when they found that their money was restored. But while I enjoy *their* punishment, I grieve to think how heavy all this will fall upon the head of Jacob!—As they told their tale, all the sorrows of his heart were opened anew: but when they came to require Benjamin, he could restrain his emotions no longer; and he said—“Me have ye bereaved of my children; Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: All these things are against me!” “My son shall not go down with you: for his brother is dead, and he is left alone; if mischief befall him by the way in the which ye go, then shall ye bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave!”

But the hand of God is heavy still on the land, and the pressure of famine reduces them to the necessity of again visiting Egypt. With reluctance Israel parted with his youngest son, and Judah laid himself under the most solemn engagement to restore him to the arms of his father.—This engagement was put to a severe trial! They were received more kindly than at first; and Benjamin was distinguished by the peculiar favour of the ruler of Egypt. The time of their departure came—and they commenced their journey in peace—with their number complete—and with the fairest hope to reach their home without evil, and to gladden the eyes of their father with the sight of Simeon, whom they had left bound, and of Benjamin, with whom he had so reluctantly parted.

Now, in order to detain them, Joseph had commanded his steward secretly to convey his cup into the sack of the youngest; and when they had left the city, he issued orders that they should be pursued, charged with the theft, and brought back to his presence. They were overtaken; and the charge was preferred against them. Secure in their innocence, they said, “Wherefore saith my lord these words? God forbid that thy servants should do according to this thing! Behold, the money which we found in our sacks’ mouths, we brought again unto thee out of the land of Canaan: how



then should we steal out of thy lord's house silver or gold? With whomsoever of thy servants it be found, both let him die, and we also will be my lord's bondmen." After this declaration, what was their horror and distraction when "the cup was found in Benjamin's sack!"

In unutterable agony they are brought back into the presence of Joseph—and offer to become his servants! This offer is rejected, on principles of justice, and *he* only is required, in whose sack the cup was found. But this was all that they dreaded—and to return without *him* was worse than death! It was then that the engagement of Judah presented itself to him in all its force; and he pleaded for his brother with all the eloquence of distress, and in a language which it would be injury to imitate. "Then Judah came near unto him, and said, Oh my lord, let thy servant, I pray thee, speak a word in my lord's ears, and let not thine anger burn against thy servant: for thou art even as Pharaoh. My lord asked his servants, saying, Have ye a father, or a brother? And we said unto my lord, We have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, a little one; and his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother, and his father loveth him. And thou saidst unto thy servants, Bring him down unto me, that I may set mine eyes upon him. And we said unto my lord, The lad cannot leave his father; for if he should leave his father, his father would die! And thou saidst unto thy servants, Except your youngest brother come down with you, ye shall see my face no more. And it came to pass, when we came up unto thy servant my father, we told him the words of my lord. And our father said, Go again, and buy us a little food. And we said, We cannot go down: if our youngest brother be with us, then will we go down; for we may not see the man's face, except our youngest brother *be* with us. And thy servant, my father, said unto us, Ye know that my wife bare me two sons. And the one went out from me, and I said, surely he is torn in pieces; and I saw him not since. And if he take *this* also from me, and mischief befall *him*, ye shall bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave! Now, therefore, when I come to thy servant, my father, and the lad be *not* with us: seeing that his life is bound up in the lad's life; it shall come to pass, when he seeth that the lad is not with us, that he will die! and thy servants shall bring down the gray hairs of thy servant, our father, with sorrow to the grave! For thy servant became surety for the lad unto my father, saying, If I bring him not unto thee, then I shall bear the blame to my father for ever! Now, therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant abide instead of the lad, a bondman to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren. For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad be

not with me? lest, peradventure, I see the evil that shall come on my father!"

O powerful nature! how irresistible is thy language! No rules of composition could produce an effect equal to this pathetic appeal to the heart! Eloquence flows along in a soft, unruffled stream, which leaves no trace on the memory over which it has passed: it charms the ear with its selection of language, but dies away with the vibrations which the tongue of the orator excites in the air: but the voice of nature leads the bosom captive; and the heart of Joseph must have been adamant, had he not felt it! But he *did* feel it—and unable any longer to “refrain himself,” he ordered all his servants to leave him, while he made himself known to his brethren, and wept aloud! The scene which follows is too affecting to delineate! Language cannot describe it! The inquiries after his father, the gentle forgiveness tendered to his brethren, and his commission to Jacob—all—all, transcend human power to paint; it was the inspired penman alone who could portray them! Here, then, we shall follow the modest example of a celebrated painter, who, unable to delineate the agony of a father hanging over the corpse of an only child, hid his face in the robes which veiled her lifeless remains.

Here we might pause, for a few moments to reflect upon the wonders of Providence! Every thing predicted in the dreams of Joseph was fulfilled, and the very steps which his brethren took to prevent it, accomplished the whole.—But we must bring you to the close of this history, and we could make no remarks, which are not already comprised in one text of scripture: “Many are the devices of a man’s heart; nevertheless, the counsel of the Lord, *that* shall stand!”

Behold them once again upon their journey: but with what different feelings to the day when they left Simeon bound behind them, and were required to bring Benjamin! Now, the way seems annihilated, so swiftly do they pass, and so speedily do they reach the tent of their father. With the abruptness of joy, they tell a tale which ought to have been delivered with caution, and by degrees:—“Joseph is yet alive! and he is governor over all the land of Egypt!”—and it is almost too much for that shattered frame—“And Jacob’s heart fainted, for he believed them not!” But “when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him—his spirit revived: And Israel said, It is enough! Joseph my son is yet alive: I will go and see him before I die!”

We will not accompany him along a journey, the fatigues of which are lightened, by the anticipated pleasure of feasting his eyes once more on the countenance of his beloved child: but we cannot

refrain from gratifying you, by permitting you to witness the meeting of such a father, and of such a son, after an absence of more than twenty years.—“And Joseph made ready his chariot, and went up to meet Israel his father to Goshen; and presented himself unto him: and he fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a good while. And Israel said unto Joseph, Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, that thou art yet alive!”\*

When the first emotions of this meeting were over, and they had separately time to collect their thoughts, and to talk calmly, how much each of them would have to relate! Joseph would mark with pain, the ravages which sorrow and time had made on his father's person, and the wrinkles which they had planted in his face! Jacob would delight in retracing the resemblance of the features of a man of forty, to those of a lad of seventeen, which was the age of Joseph when he was snatched from him! And with what mutual interest, would they listen to the alternate recital of their mutual sufferings!

But it was necessary that Jacob should be introduced to Pharaoh, whose curiosity was probably greatly excited to see the father of Joseph; and who must have been much struck with the appearance of the venerable patriarch. “And Pharaoh said unto Jacob, How old art thou? And Jacob said unto Pharaoh, The days of the years of my pilgrimage are a hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage!”—This was not only an answer to the king's question, but an epitome of his own life!

About seventeen years of tranquillity succeeded the storms, and rendered serene the evening of the patriarch's life; and “the time drew near that Israel must die!”—His family were convened around him—and his blessings poured upon the head of Joseph—and of the sons of Joseph—and of the brethren of Joseph—with parental tenderness, and with prophetic fidelity. “And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered to his people.”

This was a separation more awful and affecting than any which had yet taken place; and who does not sympathize with the pious and affectionate son, as he “mourned with a great and very sore lamentation,” and as he consigned the remains of his father to repose by the dust of his family? “There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife, there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife, there he buried Leah,” and in the same grave his beloved son deposited his body!

\* See note 2, at the end of this Lecture.



But to human grief there must be boundaries. The imperious claims of public, of domestic, and of private duty, called upon him to dry his tears—and he obeyed them. He continued to serve Pharaoh with fidelity—to lead up his family in the fear of God—to speak kindly to his brethren—and to nourish their little ones. And this appears to have been his unremitting employment, through the space of fifty-four years: at the close of which time, and at the age of a hundred and ten, he followed his father down into the grave; and left his bones to the charge of his brethren, to be deposited, when the providence of God should see fit, by those of his deceased family.

In concluding this interesting and pathetic history, we arrive at the close of the book of Genesis; the following remarks may not be deemed unnecessary, before this portion of the sacred writings is entirely dismissed.

1. The facts which it relates, are such as it concerns us to know, and such as an inspired communication must necessarily contain: for they are such, for the most part, as could be obtained through no other channel than revelation. Who, for instance, but a man divinely instructed, could give us an account of the creation of all things, and of the destination of man? And yet these are the first subjects after which we naturally inquire; and we expect satisfaction from a volume professedly inspired.

2. It appears that Moses is the true and sole author of this book—and for these several reasons:—He is allowed to be, on the testimony of the heathens, the most ancient lawgiver: the Jews, who are governed by these laws, acknowledge no other legislator; and when we are informed that Solon gave laws to Athens, and Lycurgus to Lacedæmon, we credit the assertion, because it is made by the nations themselves, through the medium of the historians, and all generations have, in succession, admitted their testimony; and we have the same evidence in favour of Moses. Neither, even admitting a book of this description could be forged, could it be imposed upon a whole people, without detection, by an impostor of later date than Moses himself.

3. The connexion between Genesis, and the succeeding books, is such, that if this be removed, those which remain are unintelligible; and preserving it, every thing is connected and luminous: so that the book which we have just finished, must be admitted into the canon of scripture, and among the writings of Moses, or the whole of the five books expunged; and then have you wiped out the first record which Reason expects of Revelation—an account of things which necessarily extend beyond her own province, and as necessarily fall within *that* of Revelation. Besides which, the

harmony of the whole volume is broken: for it proceeds throughout upon principles contained in this first book; and the authority of the scriptures, from first to last, is destroyed: for an appeal is made in every successive part of the Bible, to events which are recorded, and to facts which are stated, in Genesis.

4. The historian writes like a man convinced of the truth of that which he advances. He appeals to things, at that time well known, which are now lost; and it is easy to conceive how the several facts which he relates were transmitted to him. Admitting that he could impose upon *us*, and upon succeeding generations, who will be still more removed from the era of his facts, and the scene of transactions which he has stated, he could not have imposed upon those with whom he lived, and who were themselves by tradition, well acquainted with the facts which he relates. Should any man be disposed, after all that has been said, to determine that the whole is a fable; before he finally draws his conclusions, we entreat him once more to read over the history of Joseph, in all its native simplicity, as recorded in the Bible; and we would be satisfied to rest our argument upon this alone: we think that no one could for a moment imagine that it is a fiction: we would even venture to appeal to skepticism itself to determine, whether any thing could so affect the heart, short of truth and nature.

5. The difference of style between the book of Genesis, and those which succeed, which some have alleged as an evidence that they had not the same author, may be accounted for on this principle; that in *this* he records things which took place before he was born; in *those*, he relates the transactions of his own day, to which he was an eye-witness. Those who have supposed, that if Moses had been the author of this part of the Bible, he would not have spoken of himself in the third person, appear to us to have pointed out one of his principal beauties, and to have confirmed his general character: for egotism would have ill become "the meekest of men"——

—But it is time that we retire to our respective habitations, for meditation and prayer.

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## NOTES.

NOTE 1. "Minimus ætate inter fratres Joseph fuit: cujus excellens ingenium veriti fratres, clam interceptum peregrinis mercatoribus vendiderunt. A quibus deportatus in Ægyptum, cum magicas ibi artes solerti ingenio percepisset, brevi ipsi regi percarus fuit. Nam et prodigiorum sagacissimus erat, et somniorum primus intelligentiam condidit; nihilque divini juris humanique ei incognitum

videbatur: adeò, ut etiam sterilitatem agrorum ante multos annos providerit: perissetque omnis Ægyptus fame, nisi monitu ejus rex edicto servari per multos annos fruges jussisset: tantæque experimenta ejus fuerunt, ut non ab homine, sed à Deo responsa dari viderentur." *Just. lib. xxxvi. cap. 2.*

This passage from Justin is translated in page 151, of the preceding Lecture.

**NOTE 2.** It is impossible to read the account given by Moses of the meeting of Jacob and Joseph, without calling to mind the masterly description furnished by Homer, in his *Odyssey*, of the discovery of Ulysses to Telemachus; and a very slight parallel will show the superiority of the sacred historian over the genius of even Homer.

“ Ἀλλὰ πατήρ τοὺς εἰμὶ, τὰ εἶνεκα σὺ σεναχίζων  
Πάσχεις ἄλγεα πολλὰ, βίας ὑποδέγμενος ἀνδρῶν.”  
“Ὡς ἄρα φωνήσας, κατ’ ἄρ’ ἔζετο Τηλέμαχος δὲ  
Ἀμφιχυθεῖς πατέρ’ ἐσθλὸν ὀδύρετο, δάκρυα λείβων.  
Ἀμφοτέροισι δὲ τοῖσιν ὕφ’ ἴμερος ἄρετο γόοιο.”——

*Odys. lib. xvi. l. 188, 189: 213, 214, 215.*

“I am thy father. O my son! my son!  
That father; for whose sake thy days have run  
One scene of wo; to endless cares consign’d  
And outrag’d by the wrongs of base mankind.

He spoke and sat. The prince with transport flew,  
Hung round his neck, while tears his cheek bedew;  
Nor less the father pour’d a social flood!  
They wept abundant, and they wept aloud.”

*Pope’s Homer’s Odys. b. xvi. l. 206—209: 234—237.*

“And he wept aloud—And Joseph said unto his brethren, I am Joseph. Doth my father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him; for they were troubled at his presence. And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you, and they came near: and he said, I am Joseph, your brother, whom be sold into Egypt.”—“And he fell upon his brother Benjamin’s neck and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck.”

—“And Joseph made ready his chariot, and went up to meet Israel his father to Goshen; and presented himself unto him: and he fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a good while. And Israel said unto Joseph, Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou art yet alive.” *See page 155, of the preceding Lecture.*

Mr. Pope, in his notes on this beautiful passage in Homer, says—This book, (i. e. xvi.) in general is very beautiful in the original; the discovery of Ulysses to Telemachus is particularly tender and affecting. It has some resemblance with that of Joseph’s discovery of himself to his brethren, and it may not perhaps be disagreeable to see how two such authors describe the same passion.”

#### MOSES.

“I am Joseph—  
“I am your brother Joseph—  
“And he wept aloud—  
“And he fell on his brother’s  
“neck, and wept—

#### HOMER.

“I am Ulysses—  
“I my son, am he—  
“He wept abundant—  
“And he wept aloud!”

“But it must be owned that Homer falls infinitely short of Moses; the history of Joseph cannot be read without the utmost touches of compassion and transport. There is a majestic simplicity in the whole relation, and such an affecting portrait of human nature, that it overwhelms us with vicissitudes of joy and sorrow. This is a pregnant instance how much the best of heathen writers is inferior to the divine historian upon a parallel subject.”

In these just sentiments I most heartily concur. And it would most amply repay any reader capable of understanding the original, to compare the whole of Homer’s narration in *Odys. lib. xvi.* from line 172 to line 232, with that of Moses in *Gen. xlv.* throughout, and *xlvi. 28—30.* It will be soon seen to whom we must yield the palm of excellence.



## LECTURE VII.

### *INTERMEDIATE LECTURE.*

#### A SCRIPTURAL REPRESENTATION OF THE NATURE AND DESTINATION OF MAN.

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##### GEN. II. 7.

And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

##### JOB XXXII. 8.

There is a spirit in man; and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.

WHY does my heart beat with pulsations of rapture, when my eye measures yonder heavens, or glides over hills and valleys, along the surface of this beautiful world? When the dew sparkles upon the ground, a kindred tear glitters upon my countenance; but it is not the tear of sorrow; it springs from a well of unspeakable pleasure which I feel flowing within my bosom! Is it merely the softness or grandeur of the scenery by which I am surrounded, that affects me? No! but my spirit meets a Parent walking invisibly on the globe that he formed, and working manifestly on my right hand and on my left. All these lovely objects are the production of his skill, the result of his wisdom, the tokens of his benevolence, the imperfect images of his greatness. Every thing demonstrates the being and perfections of the Deity. I see him empurpling the east before the sun in the morning, and wheeling the orb on which I live round upon its axis. I behold him throwing the mantle of darkness over me in the evening, and kindling the skies into radiance by unveiling suns and worlds without number and without end. I gather a flower and am revived by its fragrance: I see shade melting into shade, infinitely above any combination of colours which art can produce. To aid the organ of vision, I inspect,

through the microscope, an insect: I see it painted into a thousand brilliances, and displaying a thousand beauties, imperceptible to the naked eye. I stand convinced that no mortal pencil could delineate the loveliness of its form. I perceive a grain of corn peeping above the earth. It scarcely rears its light green head over the ground. I visit it day after day, and month after month. It gradually increases. It is an inch—it is a foot in height. Now it assumes a new shape. It vegetates afresh. The ear begins to form—to expand—to fill. Now it has attained its growth—it ripens—it is matured. I have narrowly watched the progress of vegetation; and have seen its advancement. I beheld every day adding something to its height, and to its perfection: but the hand which raised it from “the blade to the ear, and to the full corn in the ear,” escaped my researches. I find a chrysalis, and watch the secret movements of nature. The insect is shrouded in a living tomb. It begins to stir—it increases in strength—and the butterfly breaks from its confinement. Meeting with ten thousand such wonderful productions every day—I recognise in them the great Spirit that animates all created nature, and I am compelled to acknowledge, O Lord our Governor! how excellent is thy name in all the earth; and thou hast set thy “glory above the heavens.”

I pass on to the animal creation. There I perceive other operations, and am overwhelmed with new wonders. The principle on which they act, and which is termed instinct, is the gift of God; and it appears to differ from the immortal principle in man, in its confinement to a certain inferior standard; and in its direction to one particular pursuit, adapted to the peculiar nature and exigencies of its possessor. I see the timid acquiring courage while they have a maternal part to perform; and, forgetting to measure the disproportion between their own strength and *that* of their antagonist, boldly assaulting those superior animals, which designedly or unintentionally, disturb the repose of their young. Their instinct enables them to perform those things to which it is particularly adapted, with more order and facility than man, with his superior understanding, can accomplish; and with the simplest tools of nature they effect that which the complex machinery of art cannot produce. All the animate creation, from the elephant, and “that great leviathan,” among animals, to the bee; and the ant, among insects, still conduct us to the invisible God; and we say, “The earth is full of thy riches; so is this great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts. O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all.”

But all these are far inferior to man. He blends in his own

person, the nature and properties of all. He has the vegetation of the plant—for his limbs expand and grow, and he combines with it the properties of the animal—for he lives and moves; he possesses also their distinguishing principle of action, instinct—for his eye closes self-instructed against the fly which blindly rushes upon it, on a summer's evening. But he has a superior principle; and here is he in truth the Lord of Creation. "There is a spirit in man; and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth him understanding." These words well express the substance of the Lecture proposed for this evening: the subject of which is

#### A SCRIPTURAL REPRESENTATION OF THE NATURE AND DESTINATION OF MAN.

While Elihu declares what man is, Moses leads us back to the contemplation of what he was; and both develope how he came to be what he is. "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." The combined testimonies of these scriptures require us to declare the NATURAL DIGNITY of man, and to unveil THE SOURCE of his greatness; and from each of these considerations some REFLECTIONS will arise, important to us, as intelligent, responsible beings.

The passages we have selected convey a forcible description of,

#### 1. THE NATURAL DIGNITY OF MAN.

"There is a spirit in man"—"Man became a living soul."  
And,

1. WHAT IS SPIRIT? Every inquiry into the nature, power, and phenomena of mind—every search into its union to matter, its mode of operation, its dependence, or the contrary, upon this exterior vehicle and instrument of its volitions—every question agitated respecting its modes of existence, and their several relations—is interesting and important. But these inquiries should be made with humility, these researches pursued with caution, these questions agitated with diffidence, and the several conclusions which we deduce in support of any favourite hypothesis, should be inferred and maintained in a spirit totally opposite to dogmatism: since, such is our uncertainty after the most laborious investigations, and our darkness in defiance of the lights which Revelation and philosophy have respectively furnished, that little more than a conjecture can



be obtained after all; and while the pride of man, on the wing for information, aspires to nothing less than demonstration, his reason, fatigued with her daring flight into regions so unexplored, is compelled, for the most part, to sit down at the lowest stage of evidence—*probability*.

Our object is not to render this Lecture a mere philosophical essay, but simply and seriously to inquire, what we are, and to what we are destined. We shall not attempt to enter far into that, which has been the mystery of every age: but shall be satisfied with proving the position laid down, that “there is a spirit in man.”—We shall describe some of the more obvious properties of mind, in answering the inquiry, “What is spirit?” without labouring to “darken counsel by words without knowledge,” in attempting a solution of that, which in this world can never satisfactorily be solved.

I feel within me a principle superior to the tabernacle which it inhabits. I mark a similar principle in my brethren of mankind: at least, I see them affected in the same way, and I conclude that they are agitated from the same causes. I discern these impressions in a child but faintly: they wax stronger and stronger; they grow with his growth, strengthen with his vigour, and increase with his age. I discover impressions on the animal creation resembling these: but they are limited; they act always in the same way; in *me*, they are illimitable; they assume a thousand different shapes; and they are confined to no certain standard. I conclude that “there is a spirit in man.” But this spirit is not to be defined; and is best understood by the effects that it produces.—Let us therefore inquire,

2. **WHAT ARE ITS OPERATIONS?** On all occasions it compares, it combines, it reasons, it judges. Whenever a subject is presented, it considers its parts, compares its probabilities and the contrary, and forms its decisions upon the preponderance of the one or the other.—I see my friend; and the sound of his voice communicates joy to my bosom; its tones vibrate upon my heart as well as upon my ear. The blood circulates along my veins with greater rapidity. Pleasure dilates all my powers, and the feelings of my heart rush to my eyes. I read the same emotions in his countenance. I see the same rapture thrilling through his frame. It is the mingling of kindred spirits. Sometimes the communication is made through the medium of the eye, and his hand-writing imparts the same pleasurable sensations as the tones of his voice: but it is still the spirit that speaks within me. He dies—and all is changed! The face of nature seems no more lovely. The vicissitudes of

seasons charm me no longer. My bosom is oppressed; and, as I stand over the grave of my departed comforts, my sorrows force their way to my eyes, and my tears fall upon the unconscious dust. I wander, in an agony of grief, over his deserted habitation. Time, which mellows my affliction, is unable to remove it altogether, and it melts only into the softer shades of melancholy. The sun shines, and the seasons return, since his departure as before: but they are not the same to me! Whence is this change? or why these emotions and passions at all?—"There is a spirit in man!"

When I raise my hand, it is in consequence of an impulse of my mind; and when I walk out, my will determines the road which I shall take: but if there were no "spirit in man," there could be no will to determine, and when that spirit is removed, the body sinks into a state of rest. Year after year, I lose my connexions: but the bond of our union is indissoluble, even by death. Memory uncovers the grave, and the form of those whom I loved, rises perfect before me. I meet them in the room which they occupied; and the ground on which they trod becomes holy. As the man sinks into the vale of years, the scenes of his former days recur, in all the vivid colours in which they are presented to him in the days of his youth. He well recollects the house in which his childhood was passed; and the field over which he strolled in quest of the wild-flower, or in pursuit of the insect; and as he reviews these early enjoyments, he seems to live them over again. This is another of the operations of the mind; and it furnishes another evidence that "there is a spirit in man."

The radiance of yonder orb scarcely reaches the man. Science discovers that it is a sun, or a planet; and imagination pursues the thought. He roves through the fields of infinite space, and without quitting the globe which he inhabits, strays beyond the vast confines of the creation, presses into the invisible worlds, enters the "heaven of heavens," and loses himself before the throne of God.

He sleeps—"but his heart waketh." The body requires repose; but the mind, ever active and awake, wanders unfettered through all the labyrinths of fancy. It converses with departed spirits: it is recalled only by the light of the morning chasing its visions. Whence is all this? These operations, from what source do they flow? This understanding—these passions—this memory—this imagination—these dreams—what is the spring of them all? "There is a spirit in man!"

But when the body grows cold—and its members are stiff and motionless—the spirit is withdrawn. The clay tabernacle is re-

duced to its original dust; but respecting the mind a new question suggests itself:—

3. WHAT IS ITS SEPARATE STATE? While our dearest friends are dying around us, and we ourselves shiver on the brink of eternity, this is no unimportant inquiry. We understand, however, so little of spirit in its union with matter, that our researches into its state of separation must be very confined: and we are acquainted in so small a measure with its modes of existence in this world, that we are not to expect very extensive information of those in which it shall exist in futurity. We cannot doubt the fact, that it can exist separate from the body, when we consider some phenomena in its present state. When the powers of the body are suspended in sleep, those of the mind are in action; and when the eye is closed, the spirit, in dreams, sees without the aid of that organ. A separate state of existence for the spirit, when it has left the body, is not impossible; and it appears to us that the tenour of the scriptures is against the soul-sleeping scheme. In vain did Paul wish “to depart,” in order to “be with Christ,” if the soul sleep with the body till the resurrection of the dead; since he would not be nearer the accomplishment of his wish in dying, than he was while he yet lived: nor, if this hypothesis be true, is he nearer to it now than he would have been, had he lived to the present hour. Neither, indeed, is he so near the attainment of his desire now, as he was during his life: for while he lived he enjoyed divine communications; but being dead, if the spirit sleep with the body, even those communications which he did enjoy are cut off—and all intercourse with the Deity is suspended in long oblivion till the morning of the resurrection. For Jesus says, “God is not the God of the dead, but of the living:” Yet said he to Moses—“I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob,”—three hundred years after their dust had been consigned to the cave of the field of Machpelah. The inference we deduce is, that their spirits exist in a separate state, while their bodies sleep in the grave.

This state is revealed in the scriptures as a state of happiness or misery; and it is not impossible for the spirit to suffer and enjoy independently of the body; and by consequence in a state separate from it. Observe yonder man suffering even to agony. What horror is painted on his countenance! What distraction looks through his eye! What groans burst from his bosom! From what does his anguish arise? His body is in health: no disease wastes him; no illness shatters his frame. Ah! it is an inward sorrow that devours him—an inward sickness that consumes him! “The arrows of the Almighty are within him, the poison whereof



drinketh up his spirit.” It is conscience that suffers: it is the spirit that is sick!—and oh, how sharper than all external calamity is this disease of the mind! “The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity: but a wounded spirit—who can bear?”—He, who can thus afflict the spirit when the body is in health, and cause it to suffer independently of the body—can fill it with unspeakable anguish in a state of separation from the body, and, by a parity of reasoning, cause it to enjoy the most exquisite happiness. The assertion of the text appears now to be established—“There is a spirit in man.” A spirit such as we have described, must, in the nature of things, be immortal. And the happiness or misery of this spirit in a future state, one might rationally conclude, even did not the scriptures positively affirm it, must be commensurate with its existence. But what shall be the modes of its being in a separate and eternal state, as we are so partially acquainted with them in its present union with the body, we must die to learn. One thing is clear—man is “a living soul;” and the Bible furnishes us with the most rational and valuable account of his natural dignity—and of his future destination. By this Revelation we are made acquainted with,

## II. THE SOURCE OF HIS GREATNESS.

“The Lord God—breathed into his nostrils the breath of life:” “the inspiration of the Almighty—giveth him understanding.” The amount of these declarations, and of the combined testimony of the scriptures, seems to be comprised in the following arrangement.

1. “IN HIM WE LIVE, AND MOVE, AND HAVE OUR BEING.”—This is the leading sentiment of the Bible, and it is strictly reasonable. It was not more immediately the work of God to create the man at the first, than it is to give life to every individual that is born into the world. He organizes the human frame; and bestows the adaptation of its several parts to the purposes for which they were designed. A wondrous piece of machinery, secret in its most important operations, and unsearchable in the finer parts of its construction! Internally, how complicated! how harmonious! A thousand springs act upon each other—a thousand fibres are necessary to life, which escape the eye of scrutiny. To guard these, what care, what wisdom, are displayed! In the whole machine, what compactness! what strength! Externally, what uniformity! and yet what variety! What grace, what beauty, what perfection! The spring of all this is life! The several parts of the machine we are

able to take in pieces, and to comprehend their operations: but this secret spring—life—altogether escapes us. We see not the hand that takes it away; we know not the moment when it was first given. Watch as narrowly as you please, the precise instant of either will remain undiscovered. The child comes into the world possessing this principle, and announcing its existence, and the sensibility connected with it, by tears! The last pulsation of the heart ceases, ere we are aware of the spirit's departure. The closest observer of the communication and of the cessation of life, can only say, in relation to the first, "It is there!"—to the last—"It is withdrawn!"—An invisible hand forms the body, animates it with spirit, expands the limbs, fixes the standard of stature, and sets bounds to the stream of human existence. He confines it now to eighty years, as formerly he extended it to nine centuries. Who will not say—"I will praise thee," O God, "for I am fearfully and wonderfully made?—Marvellous are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect, and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them!" By the "inspiration of the Almighty" we are what we are, in relation to natural life, which is given, withheld, limited, and extinguished, at his pleasure.

2. "THE INSPIRATION OF THE ALMIGHTY GIVETH US UNDERSTANDING." The dawn of reason at the first is lighted up in the mind of a child by a Divine hand. He causes it to brighten, as the limbs enlarge their size, and acquire vigour. He leads the powers of the mind to perfection, and fixes their standard. He makes all the difference which we perceive subsisting between man and man. He distributes, according to his pleasure, to some, *one*—to others, *ten* talents; and proportions their responsibility to each respectively. The spirit which in this world seems unconfined, and which roves at large, with growing delight, through all the works of God; and that which is barely sufficient to carry its possessor through life, came from the same hand; and, however different in their capacities, are equally immortal. Through a thousand invisible channels, the Father of Spirits visits our spirit; and it is in vain that we desire to trace the modes of his communications to his creatures. "God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed: then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction."

He touches the nerve of the brain, and the understanding seems to be lost. The spirit, doubtless, is perfect: but the instrument upon which she operated, the vehicle of her impulses, the fibre upon which she struck, is deranged and impaired. We are presented with that melancholy union, the stature of a man and the ignorance of a child! All is mystery. A mind little inferior to what we conceive of angelic powers, is destroyed by the resistless force of its own imagination; and reason is subdued by the uncontrolled power of fancy.—Like a majestic building raised upon too lofty a scale, it sinks under its own pressure—and from the very grandeur of the design becomes a heap of ruins. Like a bright meteor, shines the blaze of genius for a season; but, from some unknown cause, it is precipitated from its exalted sphere in a moment, and the ray of intellect which illumined the world—expires. We deplore in vain the ruins of that beautiful fabric, the human mind; and with anguish of spirit we discern the light of the understanding extinguished. But we are not ignorant of the hand which quenches it. It is the same that kindled it at the first. These are the mysterious transactions of the Fountain of Life: “For there is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth him understanding.”

3. SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE IS THE GIFT OF GOD. We too frequently see men of distinguished talents, most deplorably ignorant in that knowledge, which of itself is able to counterbalance the want of all others; and without which, all science is “less than nothing.” We stand astonished, and look upon the man as something more than mortal. What admirable powers of intellect! What a capacious understanding! What greatness of soul! What genius! What acquirements! What intelligence! What pity is it the picture is not finished! But the noble outline wants filling up by moral worth; and wanting that, it wants every thing. Alas! “one thing is needful!”—and the lack of that *one* thing, destroys the worth of all! Without this, that godlike capacity is degraded: those superior powers are abused. They are mischievous rather than useful. They are ruinous to their possessor, and injurious to society. They are turned against HIM who bestowed them. They are wasted in wanton profusion; but they are followed by a dreadful responsibility. If it should please God to kindle a ray of spiritual light in that mind, what might not such a man, in the right employment of such distinguished talents, perform! But, in the mean time, our position is established—that spiritual knowledge is the gift of God. “A man can receive nothing except it be given him from above.” We are naturally ignorant in all spiritual concerns.



Still worse than this, every power of our mind is directed against divine knowledge. "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, but men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil." He, who leads the morning stars, and kindled the radiance of the sun; He, who, "in the beginning," said, "Let there be light, and there was light;" He, who bestows natural and intellectual life upon the man; He it is, who pours spiritual knowledge into the mind, and to Him is it ascribed in the scriptures. "There is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth him understanding."

4. THE FUTURE EXISTENCE OF THE SPIRIT WILL FLOW FROM GOD. Leaving this world, our prospects are unbounded. The word of God draws aside the veil, and transports us to the foot of the eternal throne. The eye of faith numbers the different orders of glorious spirits which bend before the Deity. First, the various ranks of those pure Intelligences, those mysterious Beings, who never sinned, pass before the eye of the mind. These evermore cry, "Holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty"—and hide their faces before uncreated Excellence. And these derive their existence, and their powers from Him, before whom they do homage. Then, the myriads of the Redeemed pass along before us, divided into their companies, and possessing their respective degrees of glory: but it is "a great multitude which no man can number." Patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, lead the way: the noble army of martyrs follows; the general assembly and church of the first born spirits of the just made perfect, from Adam to the last spirit that fled from this vale of tears, are in this illustrious crowd, each of them clothed in righteousness, and bearing the emblem of victory in his hand. And these all live upon the "Fountain of Life"—all derive their superior intelligence from the "Father of Lights."—"The inspiration of the Almighty giveth *them* understanding." We have contemplated the natural dignity of man, and uncovered the source of his greatness; from all that has been said, his destination may be prejudged; and, indeed, it has been interwoven throughout the texture of the whole of this Lecture: we may keep it in view, also, in setting before you,

### III. SOME REFLECTIONS ARISING OUT OF THIS SUBJECT.

Is there "a spirit in man?"

1. HOW HIGH IS ITS DESTINATION! It was not designed to be immured in these walls of flesh for ever. The harps of angels invite us to our rest. Departed saints attract us forwards. The voice

of God himself calls us home. It is the combined testimony of the scriptures, of reason, of conscience, that this immaterial principle is destined for the enjoyment of God for ever. He who buries his expectations here forgets his dignity. Like his divine Lord, the Christian passes through the world in the shape of a servant; in the world of spirits he shall appear in all the majesty of an heir of glory. The sun shall be extinguished; the stars shall fade, the beauties of creation shall be blotted out, the trump of God shall announce the dissolution of nature; the heavens shall be wrapped together as a scroll; all shall be consumed; all shall be destroyed; the whole globe shall be a mass of ruins: but at that instant the concealing curtain shall fall; the new creation shall burst upon the enraptured sight; the redeemed spirit shall be put in possession of its everlasting habitation; and the man shall enjoy God for ever.—Such is his high destination.

Does “the inspiration of the Almighty give us understanding?”

2. **HOW OUGHT THE POWERS OF THE SPIRIT TO BE DEVOTED TO HIM!** Shall I deem His service a drudgery, who made me what I am? who requires in return only that I should fear him, and love him? and who, in order to induce me to obey his commands, assumes and exercises the most tender of characters and of relations? O, ungrateful that I am! shall I deem the gentle requisitions of a father; the claims of an elder brother, founded equally in justice and in kindness; the expectations of a friend—a hardship? Impossible! No—had he demanded the unceasing tribute of my spirit; had he marked out every moment of my life, as a season of worship: I ought not, even then, to have deemed it a hard service! Did he not bestow those powers? Has he not a right to do that which he will with his own! Does he ask more than he gave? Did not Jesus die to save that spirit? Surely his commandments are not grievous: but his yoke is easy, and his burden is “light.”—And are there any who live day after day without bowing their knee to God? Are there any who live in the neglect of secret prayer, upon whom he has bestowed an immortal spirit—perhaps distinguished talents? How are they to be pitied! The voice of joy from nature reproaches them—the voice of conscience from within reproaches them—the voice of the scriptures reproaches them: for it says—and reason second its injunctions—“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy mind, with all thy soul, and with all thy strength.”

Is there “a spirit in man?”

3. **HOW VAST IS ITS LOSS!** I shudder to paint the lightest shades

of this horrible picture. To die an enemy to God, is to have all the powers and capacities of the mind blotted out—I correct myself—*not* blotted out, but continued, and enlarged, only to increase the agony of the miserable possessor. The tortures of futurity will be augmented by the bitterness of reflection and of self-reproach. The memory will be tenacious of all the scenes of the past life—and strong to recall the opportunities which were neglected, the time which was wasted, the ordinances which were despised, the salvation which was proffered, and which is now for ever hid from their eyes! What a dagger to the heart is the reflection, “*I* have done all this! my own hand has pulled down ruin upon my head; my own hand has extinguished the ray of hope for ever: my own hand has fixed the eternal bars of this ever-during dungeon!” Is it not enough that now, when the spirit is wounded by the arrows of the Almighty, the accusations of conscience torture the bosom beyond the utmost stretch of thought, but will you tempt the worst, and dare the arm of Omnipotent vengeance to strike, and “to cast body and soul into hell?” Is it not enough that the groans from that prison reach our ears? and that through the medium of scripture, their language is conveyed to us! while they cry in ceaseless despair—“Oh! how have we hated instruction, and our hearts despised reproof; and now we eat of the fruit of our own way, and are filled with our own devices; now he laugheth at our calamity, and mocketh, seeing our fear is come as desolation, and our destruction as a whirlwind!” will not these mournful shrieks arrest your attention, and shake your purpose, ye thoughtless and profane! but will you rush headlong to the same ruin? and do you with desperate rashness demand to be “tormented in this flame?” Yet pause one moment—are you prepared to endure the worst? Have you asked yourselves the question which Isaiah puts into the mouth of the sinners and hypocrites in Zion, “Who amongst us shall dwell with devouring fire? Who amongst us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?” Before you risk your spirit for the fleeting allurements of time, and sacrifice your eternal interests to the gratification of this transient life, consider how vast is its loss! Before you quite make up your minds that these things are “cunningly devised fables,” calculate your damage, should all this prove at length a tremendous reality!

Is there “a spirit in man?”

4. HOW DILIGENTLY OUGHT IT TO BE CULTIVATED! It is the happiness of man, that he has the power of increasing his talents, and enlarging the sphere of intellect, by diligence and by application. To the human spirit no boundaries can be prescribed. Has



God given thee, O young man, extensive powers? Do not diminish them by sloth: do not destroy them by intemperance: do not waste them in wanton expenditure; do not direct them to purposes offensive to God, injurious to society, and, in the event, destructive to thyself. Keep them as the sacred deposite of God. Hide not thy talent in a napkin. Bring it forwards for the service of religion, of humanity, and of reason. It will increase by use; and the approbation of God shall be thy reward.

Brethren, "now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he, who is our life shall appear, we shall be made like him; for we shall see him as he is, and appear with him in glory." The present state of the spirit, in its highest perfection of natural and religious culture, is nothing to the "glory that shall be revealed." But the time presses on, when bending before the throne of God, it shall blaze forth, in the full perfection of its beauty and immortality.

Such is the scriptural account of the nature and destination of man; and we now make our appeal to you, whether it is not rational and animating. It sanctions all that experience teaches us respecting the natural powers of the mind. It leads us up in grateful remembrance to him, who bestowed the principle of life, at the first, and who continues to impart it through all successive generations. It enhances its value by asserting and proving its immortality. It renders the man useful to society, in cherishing the love of goodness, and in superinducing hatred to vice, by unveiling the future destination of the spirit to eternal happiness as the free reward of piety, or eternal misery as the just judgment of sin; and thus furnishes a more powerful guard of virtue, and barrier against vice, than all the laws of society could impose and preserve.

He, then, that is an enemy to Revelation, is an enemy to HIMSELF. He that opposes religion, opposes his best interests. He is extinguishing, so far as he can extinguish, the light which is sent to guide him home, and to absorb the feeble, inefficient ray of reason and of nature. He is refusing the only cup of consolation put into his hand to counteract the bitter draught of sorrow. He is rolling a great stone over the mouth of his own sepulchre, and sealing it with his own seal, and making it as sure as he can, in the hope (if annihilation can be a subject of hope to the human bosom!) that he shall sleep there for ever: but he shall find, to his utter dismay, that the angel of the Lord can roll away the stone, and that the mandate of Heaven will rouse his slumbering dust. He is the enemy of MANKIND. For he is robbing society of the cement which holds it together: of the light which has illumined these latter days:

of the source of its intelligence, of its happiness, of its consolations, of its best principles. And he who is the enemy of man is the enemy of God; for he is the Parent of the universe: the Friend of man; HE stamped human nature with his own image, and he loves it still.

There is but one principle on which we can account for the hatred of the world against revelation; and that is—this very revelation asserted from the first, “the carnal mind is enmity against God, it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” And the very persecution it has endured, are evidences of its authenticity: the very existence of skepticism, so far as it goes, is an unanswerable argument against infidelity—because it was foretold and accounted for, by the Bible itself, at the very moment of its promulgation.

One should have imagined that the gospel of Jesus, could have had no enemies. It breathes only peace. It has but one object—to promote the felicity of mankind. It sweetens every connexion of human life. It strengthens the cause of philanthropy. The only favour it entreats is, that men would love themselves; and while it pours a thousand blessings on the present transient existence, and lightens all the trials of the way, it shows wretched, erring man, “the path of life.”—And yet every man’s hand is lifted up against it! From its birth to the present hour, every age has blended all its wisdom and all its force, to crush Christianity. Had it required the man to sacrifice “his first born for his transgression, the fruit of his body for the sin of his soul”—who would have wondered that nature should rise up against it?—Yet strange to say—the horrible religion of the gentiles, which actually did require this unnatural offering, was supported, and defended against Christianity, with vehement obstinacy. The rage of man, on the one side, exhausted itself in defence of altars on which their children had been immolated; and on the other, was directed against a religion which hastened to overthrow these blood-stained altars, and which said, “Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of heaven!”—Had it destroyed the peace and existence of society: had it scattered war and bloodshed over the earth: had it trampled on the dearest rights of human nature—why, then, some reason might be given for the wrath of man against it. But it disseminates “peace and good will to man,” abroad upon earth, while it brings in a revenue of “glory to God.” We can take its most furious persecutor by the hand, when he raves, “Away with it from the earth!” and say, “Why? What evil hath it done?” And he shall be unable to assign a single reason for his conduct: unable to lay one sin to its charge: unable to prove that

in any one instance it is injurious to society: unable to deny, that it has been productive of the most beneficial effects—that it has removed all the clouds of heathenism—that it has extinguished the fires through which wretched parents caused their children to pass, and in which the fruit of their body was consumed—that it has given to the world a new and perfect code of morality—that it has thrown open the gates of mortality—that it has removed the bitterness of death—and that it has established, solely and unaided, the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead: he shall be compelled to admit all this, and yet, without a single reason, merely from his natural enmity to it, he will continue to despise, to reject, and to persecute it! Humanity is concerned in the progress of this religion: Humanity raises her voice in favour of revelation, and entreats, “Rise up, Lord, let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee, flee before thee!”



## LECTURE VIII.

## THE SLAVERY AND DELIVERANCE OF ISRAEL IN EGYPT.

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 GEN. xv. 13, 14.

And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety, that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them, and they shall afflict them four hundred years. And also that nation whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance.

## ACTS VII. 35, 36.

This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? the same did God send to be a ruler, and a deliverer, by the hands of the angel which appeared to him in the bush. He brought them out, after that he had showed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red Sea, and in the wilderness forty years.

THERE is a mournful pleasure in recalling the words, and reviewing the feelings, of those who are gone before; and whose lot in this world, like our own, was mingled in almost equal proportions of good and evil. Time has effected changes, by his slow devastations, which speak to the heart; and we cannot hear the voice of years departed, without feeling our attention arrested, and amid the suspension of our employments, giving reverence to the testimony of those, whose wisdom, snatched from that all-destroying hand, remains upon record, for our instruction. We open this volume, and are surrounded by scenes now blotted out from the face of nature: by actors who have performed their parts, and have vanished out of our sight. Here we see Babylon rearing her majestic head, in awful dignity, over the plains extended on every side. We shut the book, and the mighty empire disappears—"Babylon the great, is fallen! is fallen!" Oblivion has spread an impenetrable mist over the spot on which this queen of the nations stood, and we look in vain for some traces of her former greatness.

In the Bible we are introduced to Jerusalem in all her glory. We see the tabernacle of God lifting its hallowed curtains on the summit of Mount Zion. We hear the voice of the "sweet singer of Israel" rising amid the devotions of that dispensation, and his words are chanted to the harmony of a thousand stringed instruments. We withdraw our eyes from the sacred page, and imagination loses her power; the visions which the pleasing enchantress painted before us, vanish; and we see the shadows flit away, with regret. But *all* is not delusion—the words which we hear—the experience of the persons whose lives we study—the precepts which were given them, and which still remain upon record—are engraven upon our hearts in characters never to be obliterated.

Customs change with years. Yet is man, in the present day, what he was in ages that are passed: only he was surrounded by different scenes, he was led by different habits. His peculiar situation, his local circumstances, exist no longer: but he had the same principles common to human nature, the same feelings, the same necessities, the same expectations. Our fathers felt, like ourselves, the pleasures of hope, the anguish of disappointment, the pantings of suspense, the throbbings of joy, the pangs of fear. They lived uncertain of the future. They trembled as they approached the brink of time. The world which they now inhabit, and the mysteries of which are now laid open to them, was once as secret, and as much an object of the mingled emotions of apprehension and of hope, to them as to us. There were moments when their faith was not in lively exercise, and when the fear of death was as powerfully felt in their bosoms as in our own. Then they fled to this word for support, and derived from it the sweetest consolation. Yes—and we are hastening to be what they are. After a few years, we shall join their society. We are floating down the same stream, over which their vessels have already passed: borne along by the same current, we sail between the same winding banks, pass through the same straits, meet with the same rocks and quicksands, and are agitated by the same tempests: but they have safely anchored in the haven, and we are stretching all our canvass to make the same point of destination, that, with them, we may be sheltered from the storm, for ever! We avail ourselves of the directions which they have left behind them, because in all ages "the Author and Finisher of our faith" is the same. He will be to future generations, what he was to them, what he is to us. When our posterity shall trample upon our dust, when our very names shall have perished from the record of time, when new faces shall appear on this wide and busy scene of action, the name of God will

remain to our children, the same as it appears this night to us, the same as it was announced to Moses from the bush which burned with fire and was not consumed—"I AM THAT I AM!"

The channels of a man's information are confined to the *past* and to the *present*. He travels with a mist perpetually before his eyes: but when he looks back—the road which he has already trodden is clearly discernible: no vapour hovers over it: it is visible in all its parts, except those very remote portions of it which have dwindled into the obscurity of prolonged perspective. The faithful and impartial record of the inspired pages, causes the earliest periods of time to roll back for the instruction of these latter days. In a moment we feel ourselves transported into the garden of God, and hear his voice whispering amid the trees of Paradise in the cool of the day. We accompany the patriarch from his country and his father's house: we traverse with him, conducted by an invisible hand, the land, in the "length thereof, and in the breadth thereof:" we rest wherever he pitches his tent: we participate his domestic joys and sorrows; and at length we follow him to his long home, and see his body deposited in the grave, there to slumber "until the times of the restitution of all things." We are hurried into the camps of the Alexanders and Cæsars of the day: we visit their tents, and listen to their projects to disturb the repose of mankind: we perceive these designs carried into effect, just so far as the wisdom of Providence permits, and no farther: and we see these destroyers of the order and harmony of society, sinking one after another into the dust and the silence of death. History snatches from the hand of time, all that is valuable and useful. By her magic pencil the departed visions of ancient days return, and the fathers pass and repass before our eyes, that we may see, and admire, and imitate their excellencies; that we may abhor and avoid their vices; that we may pity and escape their weaknesses; that our understandings may be enlightened, our judgments established in the truth, and our minds conducted through the lowly and peaceful paths of religion to the eternal temple of God.

And we derive information from the sources of *present* knowledge, and from the teachings of *present* experience. Every day adds something to the intellectual stature of an intelligent man: every day developes something important and interesting. The moment reason dawns upon the mind, the man finds himself surrounded by beings occupying the same rank with himself in the scale of creation: he feels his destiny and his happiness inseparably linked with theirs; and he awakes to a sense of new duties, involving in them a correspondent responsibility. He can no longer



deem himself an idle spectator of the bustle and activity around him. Every day something transpires which affects his interests and his peace; or the interest and the peace of those whom he loves; and he is drawn from his solitude in spite of himself—he is roused into exertion, in defiance of his preference for inactivity. He is soon involved in a thousand perplexities. He calls in the assistance of his contemporaries, that he may avail himself of the aid of their observations, in connexion with his own, to learn something of the road which they are mutually travelling; and that by their combined exertions, they may more successfully combat, and more effectually subdue, the temptations by which they are mutually assaulted. We are justified then, my friends, in trying every source of information which God permits to us—and not only in availing ourselves of present experience, but in plundering, as at this time, the past of its treasures.

But we know nothing of *futurity*. God has reserved to himself the knowledge of that which shall be: and he conceals it from the highest orders of his intelligent creation.

Chain'd to his throne a volume lies,  
With all the fates of men:  
With ev'ry angel's form and size  
Drawn by th' eternal pen.

His providence unfolds the book,  
And makes his counsels shine;  
Each opening leaf, and ev'ry stroke,  
Fulfil some deep design.

Here he exalts neglected worms  
To sceptres and a crown:  
Anon the following page he turns,  
And treads the monarch down.

Nor Gabriel asks the reason why,  
Nor God the reason gives;  
Nor dares the favourite angel pry  
Between the folded leaves!\*

We may go back to the creation of the world, but we know not what shall be on the morrow. He alone knoweth the end from the beginning; and we shall have occasion to notice a most decisive evidence of this foreknowledge, in the prediction with which we commenced this Lecture respecting the subject of the present discussion, and which was delivered four hundred years before the event to which it relates was accomplished.

The book of *Exodus* commences with a recital, by name, of the eleven patriarchs, who accompanied their father into *EGYPT*, God having sent Joseph before them, to provide for them, and to nou-

\* Dr. Watts' Lyric Poems, b. I. poem 6,

rish their little ones. With conciseness characteristic of the sacred writings, Moses sums up the number of the family of Jacob, sweeps off that generation, exhibits the increasing population of their descendants, and hastens to—

THE SLAVERY AND DELIVERANCE OF ISRAEL IN EGYPT: which part of his narration is to occupy your attention at this time. We shall, as usual, simply detail the facts as they are recorded by Moses, and corroborate them by foreign testimonies. Let us,

#### I. DETAIL THE FACTS AS THEY ARE RECORDED BY MOSES.

In discovering the sources of the slavery and sufferings of the Israelites, we are naturally led to contemplate the wonderful changes effected by the lapse of a few years. Nor shall we find it difficult to persuade those, of the truth and fidelity of the sacred historian's representations on this point, who have accustomed themselves to mark the vicissitudes around them, caused by the revolution of a few months, not to say years. What changes are effected in *one* year! When we separate, who can say whether we shall see each other's faces in the flesh again? We meet at the house of friendship—we behold the father of a family happy, and exulting. The bloom of health blushes in the cheek of his children. The partner of his life enjoys unusual vivacity. We return—but grief spreads her shadow over his countenance. In the intermediate space of a few weeks, the spoiler, Death, has robbed him of his wife, or of some of his children: or perhaps we find the mother a widow, and the children fatherless. A man who travels along the vale of years, finds himself deserted by his contemporaries, and passes through the most gloomy part of his way, while the evening sun sets upon him, alone. Some have left him from mutability of disposition: some are divided from him by distance: some have been separated from his interests, by forming new connexions: some have been driven from his embraces by the envenomed tongue of calumny: some have gone before him into the land of spirits. And thus the sons of Jacob sunk one after another into the grave, till Egypt was covered with a new generation, mutually strange to each other.

How much is suspended upon the life of an individual! What an object of weakness, what a broken reed, is that individual sinking into the arms of death! How soon his services are forgotten, and his memory is buried with him in his sepulchre! Connected with life, are all the diversified comforts with which the human mind has formed any acquaintance. The charities of friendship, the blessings of society in all its ramifications, the felicity of domestic enjoyment, the relations of father and child, of husband and wife,

of a man and his brother, the reciprocal duties arising out of these, the consolations immutably connected with them—are all suspended in this trembling balance—LIFE—are all obliterated in the instant of its expiration—all vanish, when the spirit quits the clay tabernacle! Yonder fragment of the human form—the wreck of man—all that has fallen into the relentless hand of death—once enjoyed the comforts, the magnificence, the pride of power—diffused the felicity which he participated—acted and moved a prince in the circle of society—and, a star of the first magnitude, irradiated the satellites which revolved around him. To him the young looked up for intelligence: his tongue moved only to utter wisdom, and his words dropped as the latter rain. When he opened his lips, every murmur was hushed, and thousands moved not, held, as it were by enchantment, and bound by the magic of his eloquence. Such he *was!* but all these honours stood inseparably connected with life, and with its exhausted lamp, the ray of intelligence which illumined the world—expired! Such was Joseph—but when he died, the light of his brethren was quenched, and the staff of his father's house broken!

“And Joseph died, and all his brethren, and all that generation.” Who is not charmed with this impressive mode of describing the revolutions of time? Other writers would have dwelt long upon a theme so copious, and would have exhausted all their eloquence upon a subject which furnishes such ample scope for description. But what prolonged narrative could be equally striking with this single verse? Its brevity in a moment sets before you the velocity with which the stream rolls ages and generations along to the illimitable abyss of eternity. There is not a period to the sentence till a whole generation is swept away! One should imagine that Moses had snatched a feather from the wing of time, to record the swiftness of his flight, and the rapidity of his desolations!

Joseph died—but the God of Abraham lived—lived to remember and to accomplish his promise. “And the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them.” Their preservation in this deserted condition is rendered credible by that which our eyes witness every day, in their present population, the marks which they carry in their countenance decisively characteristic of their nation, and their separation from all the people among whom they dwell, although scattered over the face of the whole earth. This is one of the standing miracles which infidelity can “neither gainsay nor resist.”

“Now there arose a new king over Egypt who knew not Jo-



seph." It is not improbable that he might be a stranger, or a foreigner, exalted to the throne, for the government of Egypt was elective, and their princes successively took the name of Pharaoh, as it was the custom of the Roman emperors long afterwards to bear that of Cæsar. And if this monarch was chosen from among the Egyptians, seven kings had reigned, and sixty years elapsed, between the death of Joseph and his ascension to the throne; a space of time more than sufficient to obliterate the signal services of a minister from the bosom of princes. The bodily strength of the Israelites, and their prodigious numbers, alarmed this jealous monarch; and with narrow, barbarous policy, he "set over them task-masters to afflict them, and they made their lives bitter with hard bondage." It was now that the prophecy delivered to Abraham began to be accomplished: for they were "strangers in a land that was not theirs"—and *that*, in a state of servitude.

The hand of God continued to work in defiance of the weak and cruel king of Egypt, and "the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew." The measures of Pharaoh became proportionably severe; and not satisfied with imposing the fetters of slavery, he commanded that every male child should be cast into the river so soon as it was born. This decree, as unnatural as it was sanguinary, was executed but too severely by those to whom the commission was given! The voice of lamentation was heard throughout the land; "Rachel, weeping for her children, refused to be comforted, because they were not." Day after day the sun arose and set in blood. In child-birth the mother felt the double pangs of nature: she no longer rejoiced when a man-child was born into the world as the recompense of her pains: she could no longer look forwards with pleasing hope, and say, "This same shall comfort us, concerning our work and the toil of our hands:" the moment the infant beheld the light, the stern decree of the inhuman monarch consigned it to the grave!

At this perilous period Moses was born. Three months, three anxious months, maternal tenderness eluded the vigilance of the king, and the mother concealed her child. She struggled to save his life so long as it was practicable: the danger became every day more pressing; and there remained to her but one desperate resource—if resource it might be called, which hope scarcely dared to flatter, and which was no less than to expose her babe on the banks of the river. What *could* she do? Say, ye mothers, what would *you* have done? If she kept him he *must* die: if she exposed him there was a possibility—a *bare* possibility that he might live! An ark of bulrushes was quickly framed; and in this frail

casket, she laid the jewel, more precious to her than thousands of gold and silver, in the flags by the river's brink. Tearing herself from the spot, she consigned to his sister the cruel task of watching what would become of him. Yonder he lies, sleeping on the banks of the Nile, unconscious of the dangers which hover around his defenceless head. Under the surface of the waters, slumbered the fierce, unpitied crocodile, the native of that river. Should a breath of wind arise, the bulrush ark would be wafted from the flags, and precipitated into the midst of the stream, a vessel, alas! too frail long to resist the waves.

In this interval of bitter suspense, the daughter of Pharaoh drew near to the river, and discovering the ark, commanded that it should be brought to her. "And when she had opened it, she saw the child: and behold, the babe wept." The pressing calls of hunger broke his repose, and he missed the warm, affectionate embrace of his mother. His limbs were chilled by the cold waves, and his tears excited the compassion of the princess. His sister, who stood by, with feelings which cannot be described, a spectator of the whole scene, was sent to call a Hebrew woman to nurse him; and "the maid went and called the child's mother."

Ah, little did the princess imagine, when she snatched this helpless babe from a watery grave, that she was the instrument of raising up a deliverer to the Israelites, who should shake the throne of Egypt to its foundation. She little thought that the deserted child of a wretched Hebrew slave, when increased in years, would acquire unparalleled glory, as a legislator, as a prophet, as a general, and as a monarch. She did not foresee, when she beheld the ark floating, the sport of winds, and the child exposed equally to the waters, and to the crocodiles of the river, and pity touched her bosom, that he would stand upon the shores of the Red Sea, not only the witness, but the instrument, of the destruction of the flower and strength of Egypt: and that he would thus become the righteous avenger, at once of the cruelties of her father and his successor, and of the wrongs of his brethren, which they had so long endured, in patient submission, and with broken spirits!

"And the child grew"—and Stephen adds, he "was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians." With a modesty becoming the meekest of men, Moses passes over his several attainments: but the testimony of the first martyr for Christianity is abundantly confirmed, by the intrinsic excellence of those very compositions which are now passing under our review. CLEMENS ALEXANDRINUS\* asserts, "that Moses was taught arithmetic, geometry, phy-

\* Clem. Alex. lib. i. See Anc. Univ. Hist. Vol. II. b. i. chap. 7, note N.

sic, music, and hieroglyphics: to which Philo adds astronomy.”\*—Should any one be disposed to insinuate, or to imagine, that from the fables of Egypt Moses framed his history of the creation, let him compare the Egyptian hypothesis, which is all confusion and absurdity, with the scriptural account, which is all order and perspicuity: besides which, we have the most decisive evidences, that the Egyptian hypothesis is later by far than the Mosaic writings. The oldest writers extant yield to Moses in point of antiquity; and however distorted their compositions are, they betray their source, and bear strong internal evidences, that they are imperfect traditions from these pure records.

If Moses was indebted, in the first instance, to the literature of Egypt, for the high rank which he holds among the ancient writers, he was indebted still more to the capacious natural powers which God bestowed upon him, without which, no culture of science could have elevated him so high as an historian of such literary eminence. He furnishes one among many evidences, that in a variety of respects one man differs from another. In respect of TALENTS, man differs from man. We sometimes meet with a spirit emerging from its native obscurity, and attracting the admiration of the world. Every thing conspired to throw the man into the shade. Poverty frowned upon his birth, and shut the doors of knowledge against him. When he entered life he mingled unnoticed with the crowd. But none could close the book of nature before him, and no disadvantages could suppress the vigour of a spirit, born to rise and to astonish. Following only the benignity of nature, he brings from his mind such ample stores of observation, and discovers so much native genius, that he ascends at once to eminence; and like a sun veiled from his rising, reveals at once to the world his glory in its noon-tide brightness. Hard by him stands one, forced into notice. He was born noble and affluent. Every possible mean of improvement was put into his hand, and the book of knowledge was opened to his view. No pains were spared, no expense was withheld, in his education. And yet his elevation is painful. It is *that* of fortune, and not *that* of nature. He is always placed in a conspicuous situation, to be always despised; and the literary advantages which he enjoyed, have been unable to correct the deficiencies of nature. They descended upon his unfruitful mind, like the showers of the spring upon the sands of the desert, which imbibe the rain, but return neither grass nor flower.—In respect of LITERATURE, one man differs from another. Here stands a favoured son of science, who

\* Philo in vit. Mosi.



has access to nature in all her parts, through the avenues of deep and learned research. He has made the dead and the living, contribute to his pleasure, and to his improvement. He has plundered time of all the treasures, which he had snatched from falling empires, and rescued from the greedy grave of oblivion. And he moves among his fellow men an angel for illumination, and an oracle for wisdom. There stands his neighbour, gazing with unconscious eyes upon the page, which *he* is devouring. He sees no beauty in that oration—no force in that train of reasoning—no conclusion in that demonstration—no order in those starry heavens. All access to the tree of knowledge is denied to him; and he turns from the page full of genius, of energy, of intelligence, and says, “I cannot read it, for I am not learned.”—In respect of RANK IN SOCIETY, one man differs from another. One is born to sway a sceptre and to rule a powerful empire. Nations tremble at his frown, and princes are his servants. His navy thunders along every hostile shore, and the sword of his army is drunk with the blood of the slain. He travels—and a whole country is in motion. Harbingers precede his face, guards encompass his person, a willing people bow the knee to him. Not daring to lift his eyes, yonder peasant retires as the equipage passes, and turns his rough hand, rendered hard by labour, to the most menial services. He eats bread, and drinks water, with heaviness of heart. A large family multiplies on him. His children cry with hunger. He gives them all—he divides the last loaf among them, and returns himself faint to the labour of the field, without tasting a morsel, lest he should diminish their scanty pittance. And yet he also is a child of humanity!—In respect of RELIGIOUS PRINCIPLE, one man differs from another. Here, is a man who receives every blessing as the gift of Heaven with thankfulness; who bends with lowly resignation under the stroke which robs him of his comforts. In his habitation, however humble, the voice of prayer and of praise is constantly heard; and his comforts, however few, are augmented by the benign influences of piety. There, is a wretched man, deemed happy by the world, who never bowed his knee before God his maker; and never knew a gratification beyond pampering his appetite and amassing wealth. Yet both are men, and equally responsible to God. With great natural genius, Moses enjoyed profound literature: from an obscure situation he rose high in the rank of society: to all these he added fervent piety; and *for* all, he was far more indebted to God than to man.

Respecting the first forty years of his life nothing is recorded by Moses himself; and we shall not fill up the blank by reciting the fables of the Jewish rabbies. But one thing stands on record,

by the pen of an apostle, and that is to his everlasting honour: that, "When he was come to years, he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasure of sin for a season: esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward."

Having attained the stature and strength of a man, the first effort of Moses was to break the rod of oppression. Seeing an Egyptian smite an Israelite, one of his brethren, with much barbarity, he slew the officer, and buried him in the sand. It should seem, that this action was performed under a divine commission, since Stephen says, "he supposed his brethren would have understood, how that God, by his hand, would deliver them; but they understood not."—So far from it, that the next day, when two Hebrews strove, and he interposed his friendly offices towards healing the breach, they not only did not accept his mediation, but accused him of the slaughter of the Egyptian. The thing reached the ears of the king; and Moses, finding that it was known, and that his life was in danger, fled into the land of Midian, in Arabia Petrea, the metropolis of which was called Petra, not far from Horeb: which was either a mountain near that of Sinai, or Sinai and Horeb were two summits of the same mountain, or Horeb was the common name for the whole ridge of mountains upon which Sinai was situated: so denominated, probably, from their excessive dryness.\*

In his banishment he married Zipporah, the daughter of the priest or prince, of Midian: by whom he had a son, whom he called Gershom, which signifies, "*a stranger here*," in allusion to his own situation. About this time the king of Egypt died; and his successor, in compliance with customs of the time, was also called Pharaoh: but this change in the government of Egypt, effected no relaxation in the sufferings of Israel.

But at length the hand of God was interposed; and the set time for the expiration of their bondage having arrived—God "heard their cries—remembered his covenant—looked upon his people—and had respect unto them." While Moses kept the flock of his father-in-law at the foot of Horeb, he saw a bush which burned with fire, and was not consumed: striking emblem of the state of his brethren, who were at that time—"persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed!" Turning aside to examine this phenomenon, the voice of God addressed him, and commanded him

\* See Anc. Univ. Hist. Vol. II. b. i. chap. 7, note Q.

to draw off his shoes, because the ground on which he stood was holy. Perhaps the custom of persons putting off their shoes when they entered a temple, of which we read, might arise originally from some tradition of this history.

And now opens his awful commission—a commission so novel in its kind, so difficult in its execution, and so important in its consequences, that we cannot wonder at the reluctance which Moses felt and manifested, when commanded to undertake it. But who is able to withstand the counsel of God? His objections are overruled: his difficulties are removed: his brother Aaron is joined with him in the embassy; and the great and awful name, *JEHOVAH*, is the name by which God sends to the Israelites. This name was afterwards never pronounced by the Jews but once a year, and then by the high-priest only, in dismissing the people.

Who is not prepared for some great events, when the embassy is not from one prince to another, but from God to man? The commission of Moses opened and closed with miracles. God had said that he would “judge the nation” which should “oppress” the seed of Abraham; and he, therefore, permitted the heart of the king of Egypt to be hardened. Upon this principle, perhaps, we may account for the circumstance, of his suffering the magicians successfully to imitate some of the miracles of Moses. A question has long been agitated respecting the operations of these men, the power by which they were performed, the agency of demons, and the existence of magical arts. It is a discussion foreign to a simple narration of facts; and would your time allow us to bring forwards the various opinions of those who have written on the subject, we should only weary your attention, and bewilder your imaginations.\*

It could afford you no pleasure to-night to recount the unequal contest between Pharaoh, and the Deity: to see a worm of the dust, lifting up his hand against God; or to dwell upon the afflictions which he brought upon himself, and upon his people. All nature was armed against this rebel. The water throughout Egypt was turned into blood; and when it recovered its natural colour and qualities, it became prolific, and was the source of a new plague, in sending forth swarms of frogs. The very dust of the earth was animated, and was made an instrument of torture. The air was filled with insects. The cattle, and the inhabitants of the land, died, with diseases new and intolerable. The artillery of heaven opened upon this stubborn empire: God “cast forth his ice like

\* See note 1, at the end of this Lecture.



morsels;" he "thundered in the heavens," and the fire ran along the ground." And what the hail and the tempest had spared, the next display of divine power utterly destroyed. An east wind blew a day and a night, and an army of locusts rode upon its rough pinion. Terrible beyond description is the desolation effected by these irresistible invaders in a few hours; and unhappy is the country wherever they alight—for they leave it "a desolate wilderness!" When these fearful enemies were withdrawn, a darkness, prolonged three days and three nights, brooded over this wretched people—a darkness which might be felt?"

"Not such as this; not such as nature makes;  
A midnight, nature shudder'd to behold;  
A midnight new! a dread eclipse (without  
Opposing spheres) from her Creator's frown!"\*

With inflexible obstinacy the king refused to release the Israelites, and the last blow was now to be struck. Behold then, the families of Egypt retiring to rest, as every family retires—anticipating the pleasures and the duties of the morrow. The young man bounds to his chamber, with a foot unwearied by labour. The only son of the widow, the hope and staff of her age, receives the evening salutation of maternal tenderness, and sinks to repose. The mother who has just entered upon that tender relation, and has just begun to feel its pleasing anxieties, lays her sleeping babe upon her bosom, and smiles upon him with inexpressible delight. Even the captive in the dungeon is bound in the softer fetters of sleep, and his first born reposes by his side, a voluntary prisoner with his father. Pharaoh yields to a milder dominion, and a more gentle sceptre than his own; and hard by rests his eldest hope. All is silent, and of this multitude who have fallen asleep without apprehension, how many shall never see the morning rise! It is the hour of midnight—and in an instant sleep is chased from every eye—a general groan reverberates from the palace to the prison—"There is not a house in which there is not one dead!"—From this terrible plague the family of every Israelite was exempted. A lamb, the type of HIM, who was to be slain, in the fulness of time, to take away the sin of the world, was sacrificed; and the blood sprinkled on the lintel and on the two side-posts of the door: and over all the houses, upon which the blood was seen, the destroying angel passed, and the inhabitants remained unhurt.

Before the morning rose, the Egyptians were urgent with the

\* Young's Night Thoughts: Night IV. l. 247—250.

people to depart, and Pharaoh sent them forth with haste. "And the children of Israel borrowed of the Egyptians, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment." We notice this passage, because from it the opposers of revelation, have been pleased to deny to the Israelites common honesty. We wave the principle upon which they might be justified, in contending that they had amply earned all that they borrowed of the Egyptians, by the works which they had performed, during their bondage, without recompense; and shall only submit a plain criticism on the Hebrew word, which our translators render, "*to borrow*." It is, וישאלו—derived from שאל—a word the primary sense of which is, not *to borrow*, but *ask as a gift*; as may be seen by the following passage, where the same word is used—"Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the utmost part of the earth for thy possession."\* Josephus, in his ancient history of the Jews, put this construction upon the text, and says, "The Egyptians *honoured them with presents*, partly to induce them the sooner to depart, and partly on account of their intimacy with them."†

The plains of Rameses near Goshen, the land which Joseph gave to Israel, and which was the part of Egypt the nearest to Canaan, was the place where they assembled: and they numbered "six hundred thousand on foot, that were men, besides children." They left Egypt, according to the prediction, at the expiration of four hundred and thirty years, computing from the time when the promise was first given to Abraham. And they carried with them the bones of Joseph, in obedience to his dying requisition.‡

One more struggle was yet to be made. Notwithstanding the evils they had endured, Pharaoh, and all Egypt, regretted, the departure of Israel, and resolved to pursue after them, to reduce them to their former state of servitude. He overtook them by the brink of the Red Sea—and in the moment when no way of escape appeared, and they had given up all for lost, at the command of God the sea was divided, and they passed through, "as upon dry land."

\* Psalm II. 8.—The phrase is, שאל ממני ואחנך.—In the interpretation which I have given of שאל, I have not followed merely the opinion of lexicographers, who all agree that its first sense is to *ask as a gift*; but upon a close examination of the different senses in which the word is used in the Bible, in pursuing which I followed Taylor's Hebrew Concordance, I found, among innumerable passages requiring this first sense, but four which would bear the interpretation *to borrow*: and one of these is the passage in question—the other, the dedication of Samuel by his mother to the service of God. The remaining two, are in 2 Kings iv. 3, and 2 Kings vi. 5, where unquestionably it can have no other meaning than *to borrow*.

† Joseph. Antiq. Jud. Tom. I. lib. 11, cap. 15, p. 87, Hudsoni edit. His words are—*ἀποδοῖς τε τὰς ἑβραίων ἱτιμὰν.*

‡ See note 2, at the end of this Lecture.

The king of Egypt and his army followed hard after them into the sea; after being terrified and discomfited the whole night by the power of God, in the morning they wished to relinquish the pursuit. But the Israelites had now reached the opposite shore; and the sea, returning in its strength, buried the king, and his army, under its billows.

Such is the Mosaic record of the slavery and deliverance of Israel, upon which we should not have detained you so long, were it not, that the remaining part of our subject is very short, and we entreat your patient attention for a few minutes, to

## II. THE FOREIGN TESTIMONIES WHICH REMAIN TO THESE FACTS.\*

Respecting the authority of that portion of sacred history over which we have now passed, let the following particulars be observed:

1. It cannot be denied that there did exist such a person as Moses; and that he was the Jewish legislator. JUSTIN, in his abridgment of Trogus Pompeius,† mentions his beauty; and Longinus cites him by name, in his character as a lawgiver, and quotes the beginning of Genesis, as an instance of the true sublime.

2. It will not be disputed that Moses brought the children of Israel from Egypt. This fact is not only asserted throughout the whole of the sacred writings, but confirmed by the combined evidence of all ancient historians.

MANETHO gives an account of the time, the manner, and many of the principal circumstances, attending this event; as we learn from JOSEPHUS in his first book against Apion.‡

JUSTIN mentions their departure, but assigns a false reason for it: this, however, does not invalidate his testimony respecting the fact in question; and so far as his authority goes, it proves that the departure of Israel from Egypt under the conduct of Moses, was acknowledged in his days.§

TACITUS records the same event; and asserts that the Jews were expelled from Egypt on account of the leprosy. This conjecture, for it is no more, is perfectly groundless: because it is well known that the leprosy was a common distemper among the Egyptians;

\* The statements which follow, are selected principally from Bishop Watson's *Theological Tracts*: Vol. I. p. 294, &c.

† Justin. lib. xxxvi. cap. 2.

‡ Manetho, as is customary in ancient writers, because of the questionable sources whence their information was frequently drawn, blends truth with fable, as may be seen by referring to Josephus.

§ Justin. ut supra.



and for this reason, the law of Moses calls the leprosy the disease of Egypt, and banishes lepers from the congregation.

PLINY confirms this assertion, by speaking of the leprosy (which he calls *Elephantiasis*) as common to the Egyptians.—They might possibly communicate it to the Israelites: but it is improbable that they should expel them for a distemper which they themselves imparted to them. But

TROGUS POMPEIUS says, that the magicians caused Moses and the Israelites to be expelled, because *they themselves* were afflicted with a kind of murrain or leprosy, and were afraid lest it should spread throughout the land: which account probably refers to the plague of boils which was brought upon all Egypt, because Pharaoh refused to let the people go.\* Still observe—whatever reasons these heathen writers give for the departure of the Israelites from Egypt, they all agree in confirming the fact, that the descendants of Abraham were enslaved in Egypt, and that they departed out of it under the conduct of Moses.

3. The Jews could not have asserted these miracles, and the deliverance of their fathers, supposing no such miracles to have been wrought, and no such deliverance to have been effected, without exposing themselves to contempt, and *their fiction* to detection, among all the nations by which they were subdued, after the death of Moses and Joshua. Whereas, it does not appear that their records were disputed; and the writer of the first book of Samuel, (who was probably Samuel himself, or some contemporary, so far as his history is concerned in it,) represents the Philistines as saying, when the ark of God came into the camp, “Wo unto us! who shall deliver us out of the hands of these mighty gods? These are the gods that smote the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderness:” evidently an imperfect tradition of these facts, as they confound the transactions of Egypt, and those of the wilderness, together. Now, what purpose *could* it answer, to put into the mouth of the Philistines such a declaration, if they did not really utter it, except to expose the historian to contempt? as, at the time, any one was able to contradict it, if it were not true. But it is evident that the remembrance of these miracles was not confined to Egypt: and that other lands had heard of them, and believed them.

4. NUMENIUS, a Pythagorean philosopher, relates that Jannes and Jambres (as is recorded also in the New Testament) were chosen by the Egyptians, to oppose Moses, and “to hinder the effects of his miracles and prayers, which had brought down many

\* Justin. ut supra. See note 3, at the end of this Lecture.

grievous plagues upon Egypt, just about the time of the Jews' banishment from that country."

5. The Jews themselves, upon whom Moses could not have imposed in the first instance, kept in remembrance all the principal facts which we have recited this night, by their rites; which rites received birth with the events themselves, and were kept up till the coming of Christ; and some of them, connected inseparably with the departure from Egypt, are celebrated to this hour among the Jews: such are the passover, and the redemption of the first born.

6. In a most able work, entitled "Reflections upon the Books of the Holy Scriptures, to establish the Truth of the Christian Religion," a custom of the Egyptians is mentioned, which continued till *after* Jesus Christ: "They used to mark with *red*, their sheep, their trees, their houses, and their lands, the day before the passover; as may be seen in EPIPHANIUS; which custom could proceed from no other cause, than from the fear of the Egyptians, lest the same plague and mortality should come upon them, which was inflicted upon their forefathers, and from the hope of preventing it by the use of a talisman, somewhat resembling the sprinkling of the blood of the paschal lamb on the doors of the Israelites, which was the method prescribed to Moses, for the deliverance of his people from that great plague."\*

Lastly, These miracles were confirmed by succeeding ones, equally important, and equally authenticated. Among others—the pillar of fire and cloud, which preceded the Israelites, and which was so serviceable to them, and so injurious to Pharaoh, during their passage through the Red Sea, is mentioned by EUSEBIUS, who says, "that the remembrance of it was preserved, to his time, at Memphis."—DIODORUS SICULUS also, when he is recording the history of the Troglodytes, mentions a tradition, among the native inhabitants of the spot, of the division of the Red Sea.†

Such was the slavery and the deliverance of Israel, according to Moses: such are the reasons upon which we present this account to you, as strictly true; and such are the testimonies which we have been able to select from other ancient historians; and we think we may venture to affirm, that God has not left his word without a wit-

\* This work was composed by Allix, a French refugee: it was published in London in 1688: this extract is in chap. iii. on *the four last books of Moses*: the general arguments used above will be found in this work, which is preserved in Bishop Watson's Theological Tracts, Vol. I. p. 295.

† Diod. Sic. lib. iii. p. 122. This tradition is noticed also in Bruce's Travels Vol. II. p. 136, 137, new 8vo. edition. For the original passage, see note 4, at the end of this Lecture.

ness. It is easy for infidelity to imagine, that such and such things are impositions now: the question is, how were they imposed upon mankind *at the time*? And by what means, supposing they were impositions, did they obtain credit in the world? Why have they not been detected, and overthrown, with other impositions? How is it that these fables have survived the attacks of time, when so many *authentic* histories have sunk under them? In short, it is much easier for skepticism to raise objections against revelation, than to remove the difficulties which clog its own system. When you consider the distant period in which these events took place; the darkness and idolatry of the heathen world; the separation of the Jews from all other nations; the difficulties of a language no longer in use; the mere fragments of heathen historians which have come down to us—the wonder is not, that obscurity should rest upon the evidences of the Mosaic account of things so remote, but that such decisive and numerous testimonies of other writers should remain. It becomes skepticism to urge its objections against the Bible with caution, and to oppose it with decency. The testimonies which we have produced deserve, at least, some small regard, and are not to be overthrown by ridicule, by witticisms, by the sneer which distorts the countenance, the contempt which swells upon the lip, or the scorn which looks from the eye, of a deist. We feel no apprehensions in submitting this volume to the attacks of infidelity. These writings have stood too many ages, to excite any alarm in our bosom, from assaults such as those which are levelled against them in the present day. Let its adversaries produce a better system: let them invent something more consolatory to the heart, and more adapted to human feelings, and human expectations, living and dying: let them overturn the evidences which have resisted the devastations of so many centuries: let them prove it useless and injurious: and then shall our hearts begin “to tremble for the ark of God.”—Till then, we adhere, with perfect cheerfulness, to a just and acknowledged principle, and calmly abide all its consequence: “If this counsel, or this work, be of men, it will come to naught: but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it!”

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## NOTES.

NOTE 1.—The discussion respecting the nature of the miracles performed by the magicians, which was declined in page 185, of the preceding Lecture, because it would have prolonged the exercise beyond all reasonable bounds, because the opposite opinions of different writers might have bewildered the attention of the hearers, and because it would have digressed too far from the object, and would



have broken the chain, of the narrative, may, perhaps, not be deemed uninteresting as an appendix, and may be allowed the place of a note.

The sentiments of the writers of the *ENCYCLOPÆDIA BRITANNICA* are thus expressed:—

“The first magicians of whom we read are those who in Egypt opposed Moses. And we are told, that when Aaron cast down his rod, and it became a serpent, they also did the like with their enchantments; ‘for they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents.’ This was a phenomenon which, it must be confessed, had a very miraculous appearance; and yet there seems to have been nothing in it which might not have been effected by slight of hand. The Egyptians, and, perhaps, the inhabitants of every country where serpents abound, have the art of depriving them of the power to do mischief, so that they may be handled without danger. It was easy for the magicians, who were favoured by the court, to pretend that they changed their rods into serpents, by dexterously substituting one of those animals in place of the rod. In like manner, they might pretend to change water into blood, and to produce frogs; for *if* Moses gave in these instances, as we know he did in others, any previous information of the nature of the miracles which were to be wrought, the magicians might easily provide themselves in a quantity of blood and number of frogs sufficient to answer their purpose of deceiving the people. Beyond this, however, their power could not go. It stopped where that of all workers in legerdemain must have stopped—at the failure of proper materials to work with. Egypt abounds with serpents; blood could be easily procured; and without difficulty they might have frogs, from the river: but when Moses produced lice from the dust of the ground, the magicians, who had it not in their power to collect a sufficient quantity of these animals, were compelled to own this to be an effect of divine agency.”

*Encyclop. Brit. Vol. x. Pt. II. Art. MAGIC.*

I am neither convinced by this reasoning, nor can admit into my belief, this representation. It goes upon the supposition that Moses announced his miracles previous to the performance of them, which it is admitted he did in some instances, but it cannot be proved that he did it in all, neither does it appear from the sacred history, that he did it in relation especially to the first miracle. Whatever might be their skill in legerdemain, it would cost them some trouble to conceal the quantity of serpents, frogs, blood, &c., necessary to rival the miracles of Moses; and if there was not something like rivalry, and *that* successful rivalry, it was not a principle on which Pharaoh could be encouraged; and the circumstance of the magicians performing correspondent miracles with those of Moses, appears to be *that*, in the first instance, upon which his heart was hardened. And it is improbable that Moses should not have the power to detect the imposition, and to expose the cheat, which would certainly have been both his duty, and his interest, if the fact were as this hypothesis supposes.

The learned writers of the *ANCIENT UNIVERSAL HISTORY*, state fairly the divided sentiments of different commentators on this difficult subject, but appear to lean to the opinion that these miracles were performed by the agency of evil spirits, and not by legerdemain. They thus express their sentiments generally, on the possibility of the operations of such spirits. “That such a commerce is, or at least formerly was, possible, we cannot but confess; and we conceive it very difficult to account for several passages in Scripture, without allowing it to have been practised. However, much the greater part of what has been attributed to this sort of magic, was undoubtedly the effect of imposture and delusion, which have been so apparent in several instances, as to tempt one almost to believe the same of all the rest.”

*Anc. Univ. Hist. Vol. I. b. i. chap. 3, p. 537.*

Upon the miracles in question their ideas are expressed in language still more explicit. They state the two following reasons as evidences generally produced in favour of the opinion, that these miracles were wrought by the agency of evil spirits: “First, because the scriptures of the Old and New Testament seem to attribute some such power to evil spirits; and secondly, because Moses expressed himself in such terms as manifestly show, that they really imitated him in all those wonders they wrought.” They go on to criticise the express phrases which he used in describing the miracles of the magicians. He says, that “*they*

cast down every man his rod, and they BECAME serpents." They assign three reasons why God suffered them thus to contend against the wonders wrought by Moses, and to produce similar phenomena. "First, it was necessary that these magicians should be suffered to exert the utmost of their power against Moses, in order to clear him from the imputation of magic." "Secondly, it was necessary in order to confirm the faith of the wavering and desponding Israelites, by making them see the difference between Moses, acting by the power of God, and the sorcerers by that of Satan. And lastly, in order to preserve them afterwards from being seduced by any false miracles from the true worship of God."

*Anc. Univ. Hist. Vol. II. b. i. chap. 7, p. 562, note E.*

This representation appears to me to accord better with the Mosaic history, than the foregoing one.

Dr. HENRY HUNTER, with eloquence peculiar to himself, exhibits a strong reason for the permission given to the magicians partially to imitate the miracles of Moses. "Reasoning man will ask, Why were not impiety and infidelity checked in their very first attempt? Why were the demons of Egypt left in possession of the slightest vestige of power, to oppose, or to imitate the mighty power of God? Why grant to Pharaoh and his magicians, even the momentary triumph of their incantations? The reason is obvious. Had the Egyptian enchantments been attended with no success, and produced no effect, infidelity had its plea at hand. 'Your pretended miracle is mere illusion, an attempt to mislead our understanding, by imposing upon our senses. Though we cannot produce this particular effect, perform this particular trick, by our art, we can effect wonders equally or much more astonishing.' But, by being permitted to succeed in their first effort, and to rival Moses and Aaron so far, in power and reputation, they are insensibly drawn in, to give their sanction to the sign performed by the Hebrews, for the sake of their own credit; and no sooner is it stamped for currency, with their image and superscription, than they and their abettors are confounded, by seeing the wretched impression of their art effaced, annihilated; and no image remains visible but that of the living and true God. The power which swallowed up the magician's rods, could as easily have prevented the transmutation; but the confutation is much more complete by the one than it would have been by the other. Impiety has shut her own mouth, and infidelity stands stripped of her last, and only plea."

*Hunter's Sacred Biog. Vol. III. Lect. V. p. 115—117.*

The truly great and estimable SAURIN, with equal ability and success, in an admirable and compact chain of reasoning, which, however beautiful, cannot, on account of its copiousness, be admitted into this note, places the subject in four points of view. He tries it, first, by "the narrative of Moses:" secondly, by "the history of enchantments transmitted by every age:" thirdly, by "metaphysical speculations;" and fourthly, "at the tribunal of religion;" and in each of these modes of discussion, proves that we shall find reasons for suspending our judgment on this mysterious subject.

*Consult Saur. Discours, &c. sur la Bible: Tom. I. disc. xlvi. fol.*

To this modest and ingenuous confession, I do most cheerfully subscribe.

After such a declaration, from such a man as Saurin, it would ill become me to attempt to determine upon so nice a point. But after so large statements of the views of others, and such free comments upon them, it may perhaps be expected that I should as frankly avow my own opinion. Dr. GEDDES, whose criticisms are often estimable, yet whose assertions are sometimes announced without a pretension to reasoning, and whose conclusions are almost always levelled avowedly against the authority of Moses, has never discovered the traits which I have described, more decidedly than in his remarks on the present subject. He notices the opinion of legerdemain, and says, "The text is expressly against all such interpretations: and we may as well say, that the rod of Moses was not a real rod, as that the rods of the magicians were not real rods."—He differs, however, from every solution which ever has been, or perhaps ever can be, given; and declares, "It would be wiser, perhaps, although not so honest, to say nothing at all; but that is not my manner: I must say what I think; let others think and speak as they please." And what is this opinion, which a professedly *Christian* divine



could entertain, and which his fidelity prompted him to publish to the world? "I am clearly of opinion that neither the magicians of Pharaoh, nor the legislature of the Hebrews, changed their rods into serpents, any more than the sorceress Circe turned the companions of Ulysses into swine: but that either the Hebrew historian, whoever he was, invented the whole story; or that, if ever any such trial of magical skill took place, the deception was equal on both sides."

*Geddes' Crit. Rem. Vol. I. on Exod. vii. p. 181, &c.*

And this is Biblical Criticism! And this is fair, candid reasoning! And this is learned and liberal research! What then is to be deemed arrogant, unqualified assertion? What can be accounted indecent levity, and disrespectful trifling? If he did not blush to write such a passage, I should blush to comment upon it, so as to attempt a serious refutation of it! It was not thus that Jesus Christ himself spoke, and thought, of Moses, of his writings, and of his authority.

With no less of integrity, I will candidly avow the opinion which I am inclined to form upon a subject concerning which I dare not attempt to decide; and without presuming to press my sentiment upon any reader, I shall state it as briefly as possible, with the reasons upon which I hold it. Upon the whole, I think,

1. *That both the miracles performed by Moses, and those wrought by the magicians, were real.* For had not this been the case, would not Moses as easily have detected the imposition, as Elijah silenced the prophets of Baal? Has the Mosaic account given the slightest intimation that they were phantoms? On the contrary, has he not spoken of them in the same terms, as he speaks of his own? I am also inclined to think,

2. *That the magicians knew not the extent of their own powers.* In making the experiment, they obeyed the command of Pharaoh: they were doubtless prepared to do their best, and to use whatever deception the circumstances of the moment might allow. It is evident that they tried all the miracles of Moses, and could succeed but in a few; a decisive proof that they knew not where their power would be stayed, or to what point it would be permitted to extend. Perhaps they were as much surprised at their success, as the spectators could be, in the first instance. So convinced were they of divine agency on the suspension of their partial power, that they confessed "This is the finger of God." But the miracle at which their agency ceased, was as easy to be performed, to all appearance, as those in which they succeeded; and the inference appears to be, that they were not effected by the power of art. It appears to me,

3. *That they must have performed these miracles by the permission, and under the power of God.* And when this power was withheld from them, and continued to Moses, they instantly acknowledged the hand of Deity.

4. Admitting that both Moses and the magicians wrought their respective miracles by the power or permission of God, when *their* capacity to effect them ceased, and *that* of Moses remained, a decisive evidence was afforded of *the truth of his mission.*

5. The phrase, "They did it by their enchantments," does not appear to me to destroy this hypothesis, but only to mean, that *they used some form and parade*, to impress the minds of the spectators with veneration of their power and wisdom, and to secure to themselves the credit and fame of their success. This parade, however, availed them nothing, when their permission to work miracles expired, and they were compelled to acknowledge the interposition of divine power.

In respect to this opinion, which is submitted with diffidence, the reader will form his own conclusion, of its probability or the contrary. I will not avouch that it is original, although if it be borrowed, I cannot recollect the source from whence I drew it, nor of course make my acknowledgments. It is more than probable that I have met with it in the course of reading, and treasured it up from its coincidence with my own views: but if I could trace it to its author, I would not hesitate to give a full reference to his own statement. It is common to every man who endeavours to digest what he reads, to mingle the thoughts of others with his own: and it is not always easy to determine, which of our stores we may claim as original, and which we ought to acknowledge as borrowed: nor to distinguish between that which we conceive, and that which we only remember.

This whole discussion relates to page 185, of the preceding Lecture.



**NOTE 2.** Respecting the term of Israel's bondage, the writers of the Ancient Universal History, afford the following ingenious, and, as it appears to me, just solution.

"It is plain, that the four hundred years of Abraham's seed sojourning in a strange land, must be reckoned, not from their coming into Egypt, but from the birth of Isaac. For all the time of their sojourning in the land of Canaan, Gerar, or any other, was still in a strange land, in which they had not a foot of ground, if we except the cave of Machpelah. As to what is added, that they shall likewise serve, and be ill-treated, it is commonly understood to be spoken circumstantially, and might be put in a parenthesis, thus, 'they shall sojourn and be strangers, (and likewise 'serve and be oppressed,) during the space of four hundred years,' as St. Austin, and others, have fully proved. Accordingly, we find Isaac oppressed in Gerar, his wells filled up by its inhabitants, and himself forced still farther from them; and Jacob served, and was oppressed by Laban near twenty years, yet neither of them laboured under a continual oppression. The Egyptian servitude did not commence till after Joseph and all his brethren were dead; before *that*, the Israelites lived in peace and plenty. Allowing, therefore, that Levi was forty-four years of age at his first coming into Egypt, which is the most that can be supposed, he must have lived ninety-three years in Egypt, because the text tells us, that he died in the 137th year of his age. And these 93 years being subtracted from 215, the time of there abode there, there will remain but 122 years of thralldom, even supposing it to have begun immediately after his death. The natural sense, therefore, of this prophecy to Abraham can be only this, that his seed from Isaac on, should be strangers in the land, that was not theirs, during the space of 400 years, during some part of which they should be oppressed, afflicted, and at length brought under bondage; which term being expired, they should find a happy deliverance."

*Anc. Univ. Hist. Vol. ii. b. i. chap. 7, note K.*

This computation and extract, refers to page 187, of the preceding Lecture.

**NOTE 3.**—In the account which Justin has given, in his abridgment of Trogus Pompeius, of Moses, and of the deliverance of Israel, there is an error, arising from his linking this narrative too closely with the history of Joseph, (for he relates this departure in the very same chapter in which he speaks of Joseph,) and in his supposing Moses to be the son of Joseph. This premised, we subjoin his testimony on these facts.

Filius ejus Moses fuit, quem præter paternæ scientiæ hereditatem, etiam formæ pulcritudine commendabat. Sed Ægyptii, quum scabiem et vitiliginem paterentur, responso moniti, eum cum ægris, ne pestis ad plures serperet, terminis Ægypti pellunt.

*Just. Hist. lib. xxxvi. cap. ii.*

*Moses was his son, whose beauty of person recommended him, no less than his inheritance of his father's science. But the Egyptians, because they were afflicted with a scab and leprosy, admonished by an oracle, expelled him, with the diseased, from the borders of Egypt, lest the malady should spread generally.*

This quotation refers to page 189, of the preceding Lecture.

**NOTE 4.**—Testimony preserved in Diodorus Siculus, respecting the division of the Red Sea. Παρὰ δὲ τοῖς πλησίον κατοικοῦσιν Ἰχθυοφάγοις παραδίδεται λόγος, ἐκ προγόνων ἔχων φύλαιομένην τὴν φημὴν, ὅτε μεγάλης τινὸς γενομένης ἀμπώσεως ἐγενήθη τῆ κόλπῃ ξηρὸς. πῶς ὁ τόπος ὁ τὴν χλαρὰν ἔχων τῷ τόπῳ πρότερον, μεταπισσῆτος τῆς θαλάττης εἰς τὰναντία μέρη· φανείσης δὲ τῆς ἐπὶ τῷ βυθῷ χέρσας, πάλιν ἐπελθῶσαν ἐξάίσιον πλημὴν ἀποκαταστῆσαι τὸν πόρον εἰς τὴν προὔπασσαν τάξιν. *Among the Ichthyophagi, the native inhabitants of the spot, a tradition is given, which is preserved from their ancestors, that by a great ebb of the waters, the whole bosom of the gulf became dry, disclosing its weeds, the sea rolling upon the opposite shore. But the bare earth having been rendered visible from the very bottom of the abyss, the tide returning in its strength, restored the passage once more to its former condition.*

*Diod. Sic. lib. iii. p. 122.*

This testimony refers to page 189, of the preceding Lecture.

## LECTURE IX.

THE JOURNEY OF ISRAEL IN THE WILDERNESS: THEIR ESTABLISHMENT IN CANAAN; AND THE CIRCUMSTANCES ATTENDING THESE EVENTS.

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JOSHUA XXIV. 2—13.

And Joshua said unto all the people, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor: and they served other gods. And I took your father Abraham from the other side of the flood, and led him throughout all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his seed, and gave him Isaac. And I gave unto Isaac, Jacob and Esau: and I gave unto Esau Mount Seir, to possess it; but Jacob and his children went down into Egypt. I sent Moses also and Aaron, and I plagued Egypt, according to that which I did among them: and afterward I brought you out. And I brought your fathers out of Egypt: and ye came unto the sea; and the Egyptians pursued after your fathers with chariots and horsemen unto the Red Sea. And when they cried unto the Lord, he put darkness between you and the Egyptians, and brought the sea upon them, and covered them; and your eyes have seen what I have done in Egypt: and ye dwelt in the wilderness a long season. And I brought you into the land of the Amorites, which dwelt on the other side of Jordan; and they fought with you: and I gave them into your hand, that ye might possess their land; and I destroyed them from before you. Then Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, arose and warred against Israel, and sent and called Balaam the son of Beor to curse you: But I would not hearken unto Balaam: therefore, he blessed you still: So I delivered you out of his hand. And ye went over Jordan, and came unto Jericho: and the men of Jericho fought against you, the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Girgashites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; and I delivered them into your hand. And I sent the hornet before you, which drove them out from before you, even the two kings of the Amorites; but not with thy sword, nor with thy bow. And I have given you a land for which ye did not labour, and cities which ye built not, and ye dwell in them; of the vineyards and olive-yards which ye planted not, do ye eat!

WE are indebted to God himself, for all the information which we possess in relation to either his nature or his operations. He furnishes the medium through which he is seen in the visible creation, in the arguments of providence, in the scheme of redemption: and all that we are able to comprehend of "life and immortality," is "brought to light by the gospel." The human mind requires a me-

dium through which it may discern God, as the eye requires a medium through which it may see. As that medium to the eye is light, so is the medium of the spirit, illumination. It is in vain that creation subsists around me, except I have an *organ of vision*. To the blind man it is annihilated. The works of God exist, but not to him: he is insensible of their beauties, he never was permitted to admire their symmetry. And it is in vain that we possess an organ of vision, unless some *medium* be furnished through which it may operate. I ascend the mountain at midnight, and look from its summit. The landscape around me is the same as at mid-day, and the organ of vision is the same; but light, the medium through which the eye sees, is wanting; and I look for the river, for the meadow, for the mansion, for the hill, for all the beauties of the scenery in vain—I am presented with “a universal blank.” It is in vain that, as an intelligent creature, I am surrounded by the works of God, and am furnished with reasoning powers, with a capacity formed to contemplate, to examine, and to admire them, unless I am furnished also with some medium through which they may be seen. Revelation is that medium. Were the eye of reason quenched in the spirit, the mind would be in that state of incapacity to discern the invisible God, as is the man born blind to examine his works. And, were the light of revelation extinguished, although the man were in full possession of his intellectual powers, he would resemble the person on the summit of the mountain at midnight, in vain attempting to explore the landscape; he would possess the *organ*, but be destitute of the *medium*; he would have the *eye*, but not the *light*. And, for this reason, the apostle represents the heathens, as “feeling after, if haply they might find God, although he was not far from every one of them:” as men involved in perfect darkness, although possessing the organ of vision, are compelled to *feel* for the object of their pursuit, even when that object is at their side, or before their face.

It will readily be acknowledged, that through the medium of revelation alone, we can form any conception of things which are “not seen as yet.” We can know nothing, we can anticipate nothing of futurity, but as revealed religion removes the curtain, and unveils a portion of invisible objects. But we will venture to assert, that the visible creation itself is not beheld to perfection but through the medium of revelation. “The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork:” but the man who has never received this divine medium, discerns not that glory. “Day unto day uttereth speech, night unto night showeth knowledge:” “There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard,”



—but he understands not their testimony. For this reason many beheld their beauties, and have heard their voice, who have not acknowledged the existence of God; and, from these alone, none have understood his perfections. And, if revelation be necessary to the development of creation, how much more is it necessary to unfold the mysteries of Providence! After all, but little is at present discovered. Our curiosity is repressed, and our impatience controlled, by the declaration, “What I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.” Yet we are permitted, sometimes, through this medium, to comprehend a part of the scheme, that we may form some conception of the magnificence of the whole. God deciphers a little of his own mysterious handwriting, to prove his perfect ability to construe the entire volume. He makes known a portion of his purposes, as a pledge that he will, hereafter, fulfil his engagement to show the harmony, the propriety, and the wisdom of all.

The chain of Scripture facts to be illustrated this night, is, **THE JOURNEY OF ISRAEL IN THE WILDERNESS; THEIR ESTABLISHMENT IN CANAAN; AND THE CIRCUMSTANCES ATTENDING THESE EVENTS.**

This subject will completely confirm the preceding observations; for we shall see, in some instances, the wisdom and harmony of Providence, while so deep obscurity rests upon others, as to compel us to acknowledge, that “secret things belong to God.” Our Lecture must comprehend more or less of that history comprised in the last four books of Moses, from the fifteenth chapter of Exodus, to the twenty-fourth chapter of Joshua inclusive, embracing a period of about sixty-four years. We shall adopt, in the present instance, our general mode of discussion, which is, to consider these events, with their concomitant circumstances, as they are related in the the scriptures: to set before you such foreign testimonies as appear calculated to elucidate and to confirm the scriptural narration; and to attempt an answer to some objections which skepticism has raised against this part of the sacred records.

**1. WE SHALL CONSIDER THESE EVENTS, WITH THEIR CONCOMITANT CIRCUMSTANCES, AS THEY ARE RELATED IN THE SCRIPTURES.**

Our object, at present, is to produce an epitome of the narrative to be considered, in as brief a form as possible; and for a more complete history of the wanderings and establishment of these singularly preserved people, we must refer you to the Bible itself, whose unadorned, and faithful record, may be consulted at your leisure.

In tracing the Israelites through all their journey, and regarding them as eye-witnesses of the wonders performed for their preservation, we shall find their character to be precisely such as David represented it, when he said, "They sang his praises, but they soon forgot his works!" When they beheld the Egyptians dead upon the sea-shore, under a grateful impression of the miraculous deliverance wrought on their behalf, they joined in the sublime anthem of their leader: and if we were to form our judgment upon the appearance then presented of attachment to the God who fought for them, we should conclude that his goodness could never be obliterated from their remembrance, and that their thankfulness could never by any dangers be extinguished. Scarcely, however, had three days elapsed, before they murmured, because the waters of Marah were bitter: and no sooner was this evil remedied, than their provisions failed, and their complaints were renewed with indecent violence. With indulgent kindness, the Lord supplied their necessities, by sending, with the dew of the morning, a substance bearing some resemblance to a small pearl, which answered the purpose of bread, and which, not knowing by what name to call it, they termed MANNA—a word implying, "*what is it?*"—in the evening, a prodigious flock of quails came up and covered the camp. This event took place about the middle of April, at which period these birds are observed to cross the Red Sea in vast numbers. The miracle therefore consisted, not so much in the immense multitudes which fell in the camp of Israel, as in the direction of them thither, precisely at the time when the Israelites needed them, and on the very evening in which God had, by the mouth of Moses, promised to send them.\*

Upon receiving this miraculous assistance, they continued their journey; and immediately afterwards, the failure of water drew from them fresh murmurings at the perils of their situation, and new reproaches at their inoffensive and skilful general. Moses smote a rock, from which issued a stream to supply their necessities. We must observe, once for all, that it is no part of our business to enter into a defence of the miracles which it may be necessary to notice in this course of Lectures, or to answer the objections which have been raised against them: our engagement is simply to state the events as they are recorded, as so many matters of fact, and to produce such confirmations of them, as such, as the fragments of ancient historians furnish. It may be proper also to remark, in order to preserve distinctness of apprehension in pursuing this narrative, that

\* See Anc. Univ. Hist. Vol. II. b. i. chap. 7, note Q. p. 592.

Moses smote another rock upon a similar occasion—and that these were two distinct events. The first took place at Rephidim, in their eleventh station!\* the second in the desert of Sin, in their thirty-third station.† The one happened in the first year of their departure from Egypt; the other, in the fortieth. The former was smitten by the rod of Moses, the instrument of the wonders performed in Egypt: the latter, by the rod of Aaron, which budded to determine the priesthood. The one took place before the erection of the tabernacle; the other, after it. *This*, was performed with calmness: *that*, was smitten in anger; and the conduct of Moses so displeased the Lord, that it was the cause of his prohibition from entering the land of Canaan.‡ Having made these remarks, we shall be in no danger of confounding these two distinct events.

Before they removed from this station, they were compelled to fight with the Amalekites. Joshua went out to battle at the head of the army: Moses ascended the top of the hill, with the rod of God in his hand, probably to intercede for the interposition of Heaven.—Israel prevailed so long as his hands were elevated: but when through weariness he suffered them to drop, victory leaned to the side of Amalek. Aaron and Hur supported his arms till the sun went down, and Amalek was subdued. How lovely is fraternal unity! Even Moses needed assistance; and who can pass through life without it? Let us learn, that our burdens are lightened, our peace promoted, and our success ensured, by mutual kindness, and by mutual attention. And who can read this singularly beautiful narration, without being reminded of Jesus our Mediator, through whose intercession, and the lifting up of his hands, we have freedom of access to God now, and shall finally be made “more than conquerors” over all our enemies?

This victory opened the way to Sinai, and with the most awful emotions we approach the sacred mountain! Gathering around its foot, the tribes of Israel present themselves before the eternal Lawgiver. The trumpet has sounded loud, and long, to call their leader into the thick darkness: and see, with a palpitating heart, he prepares to obey the summons! The thunder rolls peal upon peal to announce the descent of the Deity. With frequent, and vivid flashes, the lightning cleaves the cloud, and darts across the dreadful obscurity. Sinai trembles to its base, and “a great and strong wind” rushes through the desert. Every time the trumpet sounds, it increases in loudness: and as it sounds long, the signal thrills through every heart, and fear blanches every countenance. The holy hill is fenced; and

\* Exod. xvii. 6.

† Num. xx. 11.

‡ See Anc. Univ. Hist. Vol. II. chap. 7, note T. p. 596, 597.



the command of God is, "Charge the people, lest they break through unto the Lord to gaze, and many of them perish." As with one voice, the whole camp rang with their supplications to Moses—"Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die!"—Such were the terrors of the former dispensation, and such the stern command which forbade too near an approach to God. But far other sounds are heard from yonder mount of peace. The frame of nature is indeed convulsed, darkness extends her mantle over the sky, the sun withdraws his shining, and the clouds weep some drops of pity: but these are marks of sympathy, not indications of wrath. Yonder sufferer blesses with his dying lips, compassion floats in his dim and languid eyes, and the language of peace issues from his tongue, as it cleaves to the roof of his mouth. "IT IS FINISHED"—rolls on the air, with inexpressible softness. The heart is melted by this scene, but not terrified. Contrition lays her gentle hand upon the obdurate spirit. The un pitying eye forgets its ferocity, and learns to weep. No command thunders, "Whosoever toucheth the mount, shall surely be put to death:" but a voice like the gale of a summer's evening whispers, "Come up hither, for yet there is room!"

In receiving the law from the hand of Heaven, Moses was forty days absent on the mount. A portion of this time, the Israelites patiently waited: but at length, forgetting the recent terrors with which the near approach of the Deity had filled their bosoms, and impatient of delay, they compelled Aaron, by their importunity and violence, to form a golden calf; and to this idol they bowed down as unto their God.—We conceive that they borrowed this image from the Egyptian mythology: for without it, a calf, one should suppose, would have been the last symbol they would have chosen, as a representation of the Deity. As the term "*calf*" is by no means completely definite, it is highly probable, that it was an exact resemblance of one of the Egyptian idols. The Egyptian Isis had the face of a calf, with the form of a man from the neck downwards. The Egyptian Apis was altogether the similitude of a calf. There has been one objection raised against this position; which is, that the idolatry of Israel was anterior to the worship of these idols, or of animal resemblances in Egypt: but we think this assertion hard to be proved. Idols, and image worship, *were* in existence in those days, or the Israelites had not dreamt of them; and Egypt, the mother of hieroglyphics, would hardly be the last to embrace the system of idolatry. Admitting our position, which will at once account for the symbol of the Deity chosen by the Israelites, we are furnished with farther evidences of the facts—that they actually resided in Egypt, from a knowledge of their cus-

toms—and that they had recently departed thence, from the attachment, and preference, shown to the objects of their worship.

From this event follow a succession of rebellions in various shapes, and appointments of divers ceremonies. The next point of importance upon which we fix, is the sending of twelve men as spies to view the promised land. Ten of these messengers brought back an evil report; and Joshua, and Caleb, alone attempted, by a just and manly relation, to encourage the hearts, and to strengthen the hands, of the people. Such, however, was their discontent, that they resolved to return to their bondage in Egypt; and were actually consulting whom to choose as a leader, when the uproar was suppressed, by the appearance of the glory of the Lord resting upon the tabernacle. The punishment inflicted upon their unbelief and folly, was justly severe: all above twenty years of age were excluded the land, Joshua and Caleb excepted: they were sentenced to forty years wandering in the wilderness, till that generation should fall into the dust; and the ten spies, who brought the false report, were struck with instantaneous death. A great number of the people afterwards fell in the ill-timed battle of the Amalekites, which God had expressly prohibited.

To this affecting circumstance succeeded the rebellion of Korah, and the confirmation of Aaron's priesthood—the strife at Meribah—the setting up of the brazen serpent, that striking type of Christ—the defeat of Sihon and Og—the beautiful and eloquent prophecies of Balaam—the idolatry of Israel with the Moabites, and their punishment, with the slaughter of Balaam, and of the five kings of Midian. This conducts us to the death of Moses. After having numbered the people, ordered the distribution of the promised land, and appointed Joshua his successor, in the sight of all Israel, he ascended the mountain, which he descended no more. He saw the promised land, he reviewed his journey in the wilderness, and he resigned his spirit “to God who gave it.”

We cannot take leave of Moses, without paying one small tribute of respect to his character and to his conduct. From the sacred records, we learn that he was beautiful in his person, and amiable in his disposition. He received a polished education, and on all occasions evinced true greatness of mind. Consider him as a prophet or as a general, as a shepherd or as a monarch, as a husband or as a father, as a man or as a saint, he is equally estimable, and equally interesting. A greater than Moses did not appear upon the earth, till “the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us; and we beheld *his* glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” His death, as well as his life,

breathes instruction. It shows us the danger of contending with God, and the bitterness of disappointment, when an object ardently desired is seen, but not permitted to be enjoyed. It is an emblem of the death of a Christian, who, in his last moments, in the same way, casts his eyes over the past and the future. In one word, living and dying, he was a most inestimable character: and well did he merit the tears, which "the many thousands of Israel" shed to his memory.

The tents of Israel were pitched at Shittim, during the days of mourning for Moses; and, encamped on the verge of Jordan, the people expected the divine signal for passing that river.\* Nor could any thing less than a divine command have encouraged Joshua and the Israelites to proceed. All circumstances considered, we think it would have been a greater miracle, had they encountered the dangers which they were conscious were before them, *without* a divine communication, than the admission of the fact asserted in the scriptures, that they *knew* themselves acting under the authority and support of a divine commission, supposes. Joshua was ninety-three years of age. He was, indeed, at the head of six hundred thousand fighting men: but his army was also encumbered with women, children, servants, cattle, and all the necessities for travelling. The nations who opposed him were numerous, warlike, of gigantic stature and strength: their towns fortified by nature, and by art: their forces concentrated, and their interests united by alliances: this union was strengthened by alarm: they had every thing to lose, and with the most determined and steady courage, they resolved to repel the invaders.

After the spies sent by Joshua to inspect the country had returned in peace, preparations were made for passing the river Jordan. This hazardous undertaking, which was to cast the die, and to commence the conflict with the Canaanites, was arranged under the immediate direction of Heaven. The people sanctified themselves, and the priests bearing the ark of God opened the procession. Each tribe observed the same order as they had done in their marches. The enterprise commenced on a day which answers to the thirteenth of our April, the day on which the paschal lamb was selected and separated. At this time of the year, Jordan usually overflowed its banks, from the melting of the snows of Lebanon, and of other neighbouring mountains.—But so soon as the feet of the priests, who bare the ark, touched the waves of this rapid river, God caused the stream to roll back; and it stood in heaps

\* For the succeeding statements, see the book of Joshua. See also Anc. Univ. Hist. Vol. III. b. i. chap. 7.



far beyond the city of Adam, while the flood below, continuing its course to the Dead Sea, opened a passage of about sixteen or eighteen miles in breadth, for the armies of Israel, till they had passed over. The priests, who had continued in the bed of the river till the whole army had crossed, now remained while twelve stones were set up which might be seen on either shore when the waters were abated, and until twelve stones, taken out of the channel, were piled on the other side of the river. They then ascended to the opposite shore, and Jordan, with its wonted impetuosity, rolled its stream towards the Dead Sea.

After this miraculous passage, the passover was celebrated for the *third* time. Jericho was soon after taken in an extraordinary manner; and the account of its capture is abundantly strengthened, by the fulfilment of a most remarkable prophecy uttered at the time. Joshua predicted, when it was razed to the ground, that whosoever should attempt to rebuild it should "lay the foundations thereof in his first born, and set up the gates thereof in his youngest son."—This curse was literally fulfilled above five hundred and fifty years after it was denounced. Hiel, the Bethelite, attempted to rebuild it: but "he laid the foundation thereof in Abiran, his first born, and set up the gates thereof in his youngest son Segub," who both died in consequence of the trespass of their father. After the death of Achan, the conquest of the land was effected in about six years.

In the battle against the five kings who fought against Gibeon, two miracles are recorded: the assistance afforded the Israelites by a fall of hail-stones, and the standing still of the sun and moon at the command of Joshua. For the first of these, we observe that it is *now* no uncommon thing to read of a storm literally of stones, which probably was the case in this tempest of Joshua: and these phenomena have been attributed to earthquakes, eruptions, and various causes. The miracle, then, consists in the timing of this awful storm, and the direction of its fury against the enemies of Israel. For the standing still of the sun and moon, we conceive that this miracle does not militate against the present system of astronomy, since the suspension of the earth's motion would produce the same appearances, and not only the sun and moon, but all the planets, would necessarily seem to be stationary. As this last was a miracle, conspicuous not merely to the enemies with whom they fought, but to all nations, it must have been, to the Canaanites, a most afflictive demonstration, that the hand of God was against them, and with their enemies; and thus is the design, the propriety, and the necessity, of this miracle, at once demonstrated. Thus, by little

and little the whole land was subdued, till the Israelites obtained complete possession; and before he closed his eyes in death, Joshua divided the whole country among the several tribes, and beheld the final accomplishment of the promise, which God had made, so many centuries before, to Abraham. Having brought into as narrow a compass as possible the statement of these facts according to the scriptures,

II. WE SHALL SET BEFORE YOU SUCH FOREIGN TESTIMONIES AS  
APPEAR TO US CALCULATED TO ELUCIDATE AND TO CONFIRM  
THIS ACCOUNT.

We shall produce,

1. POSITIVE EVIDENCE FROM THE MOST ANCIENT WRITERS, either relative to particular facts, or to the circumstances attending them. The birth of Moses, his deliverance from the water, and his receiving the moral law, is selected by EUSEBIUS out of ARISTOBULUS. The ancient writer of the ORPHIC verses, after asserting that only one God is to be worshipped as the Creator and Governor of the world, adds, "So was it said of old: so he commands, who was born of water, and who received of God the two great tables of the moral law." STRABO applauds Moses for reproving the error of the Egyptians in likening the Deity to beasts. JUVENAL mentions the adherence of the Jews to their law, "given by Moses." As a writer, he is spoken of by DIODORUS SICULUS, PLINY, and TACITUS; and they regard his history with great respect. We have already seen that LONGINUS quotes the opening of Genesis, as an instance of the true sublime. CHALCIDIVS borrowed many things from the writings of Moses, whom he calls "the wisest of men, enlivened not by human eloquence, but by divine inspiration." HERMIPPAS, in his life of Pythagoras, quoted by Josephus against Appion, says, that "he took many things into his own philosophy from the Jewish laws." Ancient writers in general conspire to speak highly of the piety of the Jews, so long as they adhered to the law. These testimonies furnish a most decisive evidence, both of the antiquity of the Mosaic writings, and of the estimation in which his history was held.\* The EGYPTIANS imitated the Urim and Thummim, mentioned in the ceremonial laws: for DIODORUS says, that the chief justice "carries on his neck an image of precious stones, suspended on a golden chain." The heathen POETS assert that Jupiter overwhelmed the enemies of Hercules in ARIM, which is precisely the country where Joshua

\* Grotius de Ver. Relig. Christ. § 16. See, also, note I, at the end of this Lecture.

fought with the children of Anak, by a "tempest of stones." Moreover, it appears credible that the fables current in the heathen world, of the protraction of the day and of the night, attributed to their deities, as their pleasure, or their convenience required, originated in the fact of the miracle wrought by Joshua, in arresting the light of the sun and moon.

The establishment of the Jews in Canaan, as a fact, cannot be questioned. They long made it the seat of empire. Skepticism itself admits the existence of the nations which preceded Israel; but objects to the conduct of Joshua in dispossessing them of their territories.

The testimonies which we have adduced confirm the Mosaic history *as a whole*, rather than *detached parts* of it; and surely, when it is considered, as it has been clearly proved by Josephus on the testimony of MANETHO,\* that the settlement of the Jews in Canaan was three hundred and ninety-three years before Danaus came to Argos, whom the Grecians acknowledge their most ancient prince, and from whom they are frequently named; and that it preceded the transactions of Troy, celebrated by their most ancient poets, a thousand years; particular confirmations of such striking events as the deluge, and general acquiescence with the scripture record, is all that ought to be, and all that can be, expected from heathen writers. They could not know any thing of these circumstances but by tradition. ORPHEUS himself lived but one thousand years before Christ; HESIOD, nine hundred; HOMER, eight hundred and fifty. Orpheus himself, therefore, was only contemporary with Rehoboam, the son of Solomon. The settlement in Canaan took place one thousand four hundred and twenty-seven years before the birth of our Lord: that is, four hundred and twenty seven years before Hesiod: and five hundred and seventy-seven years before the celebrated Homer. Is it a subject for wonder that obscurity should rest upon facts so ancient? We appeal to the unprejudiced—is it not rather extraordinary, that facts so remote should have evidences so strong and decisive? We wish to produce,

## 2. CONSIDERATIONS WHICH MAY BE DEEMED CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCES.

When the law was given at Sinai, it was given publicly. Nothing was done in secret. Peculiar glory, splendour, and notoriety, attended its dispensation. It was not a meeting of the chiefs of the nation, who reported to the people that such an appearance had been manifested to them. No! the whole camp witnessed the magni-

\* See note 2, at the end of this Lecture.



ficent scene. They were not asleep when God descended in terrible majesty. They were awake to every transaction, when they prostrated themselves on the ground, and cried, "Let not God speak to us, lest we die." Moses could not impose on their senses. Is it probable, had not the Israelites actually seen "this great sight," and had not they been completely convinced that Moses was forty days and forty nights upon Mount Sinai, and that he really did receive the law from the hand of God,—is it probable that they would have submitted to the moral, and especially to the ceremonial laws, many of which were opposite both to their opinions, and to their ancient customs? The adherence of the Jews to their law in every age, is an incontestable proof that *they* believe the fact of the manner in which it was given; and how was it possible for Moses to deceive their fathers, in those things of which they were eye and ear-witnesses? We say nothing respecting the morality, the equity, and the perfection of the moral law, which demonstrates that God alone could be its author. Compared with it, all the admired codes of the wisest legislators of antiquity are barbarous. We waive this, and simply ask a question, which we challenge infidelity to answer, if it be able. A man may pretend to a revelation, without having it, as did Mahomet: but the case before us is widely different. Here is no secrecy, or concealment; here are no visions or dreams. The cloud, the fire, the trumpet, the darkness, were seen and heard by all the camp of Israel. They were prepared for the event by purification. Moses ascended in their presence, and descended before them. They saw his fears: they saw the tables of the law taken up, plain, ungraven stone: they saw them when they were brought down, filled. Events were recorded at the moment in which they took place: his history was in the hands of his contemporaries; and his law was publicly read at stated periods. We ask, how was it possible for him to impose, in the first instance, upon the Jews? We are reduced to this alternative. Either we must give up the history of Moses, (corroborated as it is by foreign testimonies) altogether: we must believe this book of forgery from first to last: we must even deny the existence of the Jewish nation at that period: or we must admit his miracles as matters of fact; since he could no more impose the *manner* of the giving of the law, than the *law itself*, upon the Jews. Admit that the law was given, and that he is the author of these books and you must, to be consistent, admit all its circumstances.

Respecting the manna, the pillar of cloud and of fire, and of other miraculous circumstances attending their journey, was it possible to have imposed the belief of these things upon the progenitors of

the Jews (through whose hands these writings were transmitted from generation to generation) unless they really existed? Was it possible to persuade the multitude, that they were every day fed from heaven, for the space of forty years, had not this actually been the case? And without a miraculous supply, how could Moses march such an army, through such a country, except he possessed an enormous magazine of provisions? And from what sources could he derive it?

Whence arose the various customs of the Jews perpetuated to the present hour, if they did not originate in facts such as he records? What could give rise to the passover? What could have suggested the various ceremonies of the Jewish worship? Was not the brazen serpent in existence in the days of Hezekiah? What has preserved these singular institutions in every age, and in every country? They must have had some origin. We admire two things in the divine government: the one—the perpetuation of miracles till after the coming of Christ, so that every fresh miracle confirmed former ones: the other—the continuation of the rites of the Jews down to the present hour. Were it not from the circumstance of the rejection of the Saviour by the Jews, and their consequent obstinate adherence to their ceremonial law, perhaps it would be denied that such rites ever existed. In this we cannot but perceive the wisdom of Providence, amid all its obscurity. Could a whole nation, from the first to last, be deceived? Impossible! I never see a Jew without feeling conviction of the truth of divine revelation.

The reservation of some of the Canaanites for several ages, and the total extermination of them having never been effected, was a decisive evidence to succeeding generations, who were not eye-witnesses of the entrance of their fathers into Canaan, both of the existence, and of the manners, of its former inhabitants; and, by consequence, a confirmation of all the records put into their hands. This, doubtless, was one important reason why they were not all destroyed.

Once again—the reference which all the writings of Moses had to the Messiah, forms a part of that grand and unbroken chain, which runs through the whole volume of scripture, from first to last, and which renders it impossible to take away any part, without destroying the beauty, and affecting the existence, of all.

### III. WE SHALL NOTICE THE OBJECTIONS WHICH SKEPTICISM HAS RAISED AGAINST THIS PART OF THE SACRED WRITINGS.

1. THEY OBJECT TO THE CONDUCT OF THE ISRAELITES AS IMMORAL. They have compared the settlement of the Jews in Canaan, to the cruelty of the Spaniards at Mexico, and have asserted, that the one

had as little right as the other, to dispossess the original inhabitants of these respective places, of their territories. Before the writings of Moses are condemned altogether on these plausible pretences, we shall interpose a series of propositions drawn up by a most able hand,\* which we think are unanswerable, but upon which you will form your own conclusions. They are as follows: "That the Almighty has a sovereign right over the lives and fortunes of his creatures: That the iniquity of nations, may become such as to justify him in destroying those nations: That he is free to choose the instruments by which he will effect such destructions: That there is not more injustice, or cruelty, in effecting it by the sword, than by famine, pestilence, whirlwind, deluge and earthquake: That the circumstance of a divine commission entirely alters the state of the case, and distinguishes the Israelites from the Spaniards, or any other plunderers as much as a warrant from the magistrate distinguishes the executioner from the murderer: that men may be assured of God's giving such a commission: And there is incontestable evidence upon record, and from facts, that the Israelites were thus assured." We think it will require no small degree of skill, to overturn propositions so reasonable, and so admirably dependent upon each other.

2. THEY OBJECT TO IT AS CRUEL, on account of the slaughter of children. This is an argument produced on every occasion in which the Bible records human desolation. We have again to remind them, that, on this principle, they ought to quarrel with famine, and earthquakes, and all the scourges of nature; and not only so, but with the natural stroke of death, by which thousands of children are destroyed every day. In a word, if the security and tranquillity of infants be the reasonable result of their freedom from actual offence, we must arrive at this point, that they ought in justice to be delivered from the infliction of all evil; and thus must we either deny the experience of every day, which exhibits children suffering pains and sorrows incessantly, or habitually dispute the justice, and the goodness, of God in the government of the world.

3. THEY OBJECT TO IT AS IMPROPER. They assert, that God should not use instruments, who might be *hardened* by the execution of their commission. In every point of view the case was different with the Jews. It was *not* effected, said the text justly, by their "own sword," and by "their own bow; but by the hornet," and by a series of miracles, which plainly demonstrated the interposition of Providence. Moreover, the execution of their commission was not calculated to harden their hearts against any thing but sin; and was designed as an awful lesson of caution to themselves: since they were expressly assured, that the same vices would

\* Bishop Horne.



draw upon them the same displeasure, expose them inevitably to the same calamities, and drown them in the same perdition.

The history which has passed under review, affords a striking exemplification of divine fidelity and purity, and of the harmony and success of all the designs of God. Whatever is difficult and obscure, this is plain and luminous: whatever in Providence is calculated to impress awe and terror, this excites only the emotions of admiration and delight.

It is pleasant to observe, amid the caprices, and the fluctuations of human purposes, the undivided, and unshaken plans of Jehovah, hastening with undeviating perseverance to their completion. Man commences operations to-day, which he abandons to-morrow. Either the difficulties that present themselves are insurmountable, or he is weary of the length of way which is between him and the attainment of his wishes, or some new object is started, or he is interrupted by death: from some cause or other, it is seldom that his purpose is accomplished. He began to build, but either he had not counted the cost, or not well chosen the ground, or through lack of materials, or workmen, the tools fell from his hand, and the unfinished edifice stands a lasting monument of the folly, the poverty, or the caprice, of the architect. It is not so with the Deity. No difficulty can impede his designs: he commands, and the mountain becomes a plain. No length of time can frustrate his wishes: for time is swallowed up before him. That which his will purposes, is, in his estimation, accomplished: for, to him, the distance between the plan and its execution, is annihilated. "A thousand years with the Lord are as one day,"—"a thousand ages, as yesterday when it is past." No new object can distract his attention, and lead him aside from his original purpose: for "he is of one mind, and who can turn him?" and he "seeth the end from the beginning." Death cannot interrupt his operations: for with him is "neither beginning of days, nor end of life." He counts the cost, and lays the foundation of the edifice, deep and lasting: he furnishes materials, and raiseth up workmen to prosecute his designs; and although these "cannot continue by reason of death," as they drop the tools, he puts them into the hands of others! One strikes a blow or two with the hammer, and drives a nail: another spreads the mortar, places "one stone upon another," leaves it to cement, and falls asleep: a third pursues the process; and amid the removal of the labourers, the building of God continues to rise, till "the top-stone is brought forth with shouting."

It is pleasant to see the Deity superintending the deliberations of those who acknowledge him not, and from their chaos causing a

beautiful creation to spring to light. In the midst of senates, of privy councils, and of camps, the invisible God presides. The conqueror knows him not, and the assembly think not of *him*, who is in the midst of them. Short-sighted and bewildered in their plans, *their* schemes are dictated by the exigencies of the moment: but *he* is making them the instruments of fulfilling his pleasure. They wish to shake the power of this and that empire, to check the insolent rapacity of an unprincipled tyrant, to extend their own political interests, or to add such a track of country, and such a distant possession, to their own dominion. They form alliances, and project enterprises: he sanctions, or crushes, these, as he sees fit—still pursuing his own eternal purposes.

It is pleasant to see the gradual development of his plans, and the regular succession of events, which accomplish them. He is “a God of order, and not of confusion.” Nothing is premature, nothing is retarded, nothing is out of place. All is concord, co-operation, utility, beauty, stability.

It will be pleasant hereafter to see the accomplishment of the whole scheme. So transient is our present existence, that a very small portion of the divine plans can fall within its narrow compass. In a few instances, like the present, the records of truth enable us to form some conception of the operations of God, and the history is a counterpart of the prediction. But when we shall have subdued our enemies, and completed our wanderings in the wilderness: when we shall have passed Jordan, and taken possession of our heavenly Canaan; we shall compare the prediction, the event, and its consequences together; and with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, raise the shout of triumph in the kingdom of God!

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## NOTES.

NOTE 1.—Grotius has distinctly enumerated the testimonies from ancient writers, which we mentioned generally: to which he has added others which we did not produce. He says, respecting the Orphic verses, “The great Scaliger has mended the passage, by changing a letter; and instead of reading the word *ὀλογενης*, as Eusebius, in his *Præp. Evan.* lib. xiii. cap. 12, quotes it from Aristobulus, he bids us read it *ὕδωγενης*”—*born of the water*. His quotation from Strabo is not inserted here, because, while his testimony to the great character of Moses is decisive, he has mingled the fable of tradition so entirely with his evidence, that the passage would not be worthy the room it would occupy in this note. It is in his xvi. book. There is a remarkable testimony in Diodorus Siculus, in the first book of his history, comprised in a single sentence. He had been speaking of those who assert that the gods were the authors of their laws—and adds, *παρὰ Ἰσθαίοις δὲ Μωσὴν τὸν Ἰᾶω ἐπικαλεσμένον Θεόν*—*As Moses, who,*

among the Jews, called God, 'Iáo (Iao.) Grotius quotes this passage also, and says, that by 'Iáo, (Iao) יהוה (Jehovah) is intended; and that the name was so pronounced, "by the oracles, in the Orphic verses, by the Basilidian heretics, and others Gnostics:" also, with little variation, "by the Tyrians." These quotations, with his important remarks, are to be found in his Truth of the Christian Religion: book i. sect. 16, notes 83—101.

NOTE 2.—Testimony of Josephus, to the early settlement of the Jews in Canaan. Ταῦτα μετὰ ὁ Μανεθῶν· δὲ ἐστὶν ἐκ τῶν εἰρημένων ἐτῶν τὰ χρόνα συλλογισθέντος, ὅτι οἱ καλεσμένοι ποιμένες, ἡμέτεροι δὲ πρόγονοι, τρισὶ καὶ ἑννενηκοντα καὶ τριακοσίοις πρόσθεν ἔτεσιν, ἐκ τῆς Αἰγύπτου ἀπαλλαγέντες, τὴν χώραν ταύτην ἀπώκησαν, ἣ Δαναῶν εἰς Ἀργεὺς ἀφικεσθαι· καὶ τοὶ τῶτον ἀρχαιότατον Ἀργεῖοι νομίζουσι.—Thus far Manetho. Therefore, estimating the time from the beginning of those years, (alluding to some foregoing calculations according to Manetho's history,) it will appear, that our ancestors, whom they call shepherds, migrated from Egypt, and inhabited this country, 393 years before Danaus came to Argos, which is, nevertheless, celebrated by the Greeks for antiquity. Josephus adds, that "two things are evident from Manetho's account: first, that the Jews came from another place to Egypt: secondly, that they left them again, and that nearly a thousand years before the Trojan war." Lowth says, that this calculation is double the true distance of time between these events. However, the establishment of the Jews in Canaan, is much earlier than any Grecian writer, or history. See Josephus, contra Appion. Tom. II. lib. i. p. 1339. Hudsoni edit.



## LECTURE X.

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE JEWS—INCLUDING THE THEOCRACY AND MONARCHY, TO THE BUILDING OF SOLOMON'S TEMPLE; WITH A CONFIRMATION OF SOME SUBORDINATE FACTS.

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I SAM. VIII. 6—10, AND 19, 20.

But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a King to judge us: and Samuel prayed unto the Lord; and the Lord said unto Samuel, Harken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected ME, that I should not reign over them. According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt, even unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken me, and served other gods: so do they also unto thee. Now, therefore, hearken unto their voice: howbeit, yet protest solemnly unto them, and show them the manner of the King that shall reign over them. And Samuel told all the words of the Lord unto the people, that asked of him a king.—Nevertheless, the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay, but we WILL have a king over us: That we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles.

ACTS VII. 44—48.

Our Fathers had the Tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, as he had appointed, speaking unto Moses, that he should make it according to the fashion that he had seen. Which also our fathers that came after, brought in with Jesus into the possession of the Gentiles, whom God drave out before the face of our fathers, unto the days of David; who found favour before God, and desired to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob. But Solomon built him a house. Howbeit, the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands.

HEB. XI. 32—34.

- And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae, of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets. Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

WHATEVER be the views of man respecting the veracity of the scriptures, it must be admitted that the subjects of which they treat,

and upon which they promise elucidation, are to the last degree interesting and important. If there be a God, it is of the first consequence, that we should understand our relation to him, the duties which we owe him, and the service which he requires. The question whether revelation has given us just views on this subject, cannot be solved, except it be in the first instance seriously received, and cautiously examined, and professing to give us decisive information upon these points, it demands respect, it should awaken interest, it should promote inquiry, and the investigation of its claims, ought to be conducted under the influence of a sincere desire to serve the cause of truth. As it is professedly the production of men of real genius, and displays eloquence, and beauty, which extort unwilling praise from the lips of its adversaries, it ought not to be treated either with indifference or with contempt. The wisdom manifested, and the good proposed in it, are vastly above ridicule. While it professes to be the word of God, and till the contrary be incontestably proved it should be approached with respect; and as the subjects it proposes are inseparably connected with our peace, it should be examined with care. It is exceedingly absurd to pre-judge a cause which we have not tried, and to condemn a book which we have not read. And yet it is more than probable that the larger number of the opponents of revelation, have not taken the trouble to examine its contents, much less to weigh its evidences. What, then, are we to think of a man who could sit down to refute a book, which from his own confession he had not read for years; and which, if we may form a judgment upon his injurious and profane production, he had never consulted with attention? When he had occasion to refer to its compositions, not possessing a Bible of his own, and not willing to re-examine the production which he so virulently, and on such slender ground, condemned, he was compelled to substitute a poetical paraphrase for the simple language of the scriptures! Is this candour? Is this liberality? Is this fair and impartial criticism? If it be, may Infidelity ever enjoy the triumph of possessing it: we neither envy, nor desire to share such honours; we are satisfied that the glory shall be all their own. If we would find out truth, the pretensions of this book must be fairly examined, and *that* examination should be made with a mind removed, as remotely as possible, from the influence of prejudice. Wherever the truth shall eventually be found to lie, its cause will not have been served by those on either side, who have prosecuted their researches with indolence, or drawn their conclusions without candour.

The present Lecture is a resting-point, and from its nature, in-

duces us to survey the ground which we have already trodden. We have advanced step by step through the Jewish history, from the calling of their great progenitor Abraham, to their complete establishment in Canaan. What important lessons arise out of this long chain of historical events! what examples of piety! what trials of patience! what exercises of faith! what elucidations of providence! what evidences of divine veracity! Abraham received the promise of a son at the advanced age of a hundred years; and the accomplishment of the prediction was the dawn of the fidelity of God. When this patriarch died, he left behind him, for his son, no inheritance in Canaan, no "not so much as to set his foot on"—the "cave of the field of Machpelah" excepted; and that, he held by purchase, not as the gift of Heaven. Did this appear like the possession of the promised land by his descendants? Yet in tracing successive events through all their windings revelation has furnished us with decisive evidences as the result of our inquiries, that all these promises were fulfilling in their order, and that they actually did receive their complete accomplishment. Through the envy of his brethren the favourite son of Jacob was sold into Egypt. By a most extraordinary combination of events, the little Hebrew captive was seated upon the throne of the kingdom, next to the monarch himself. A famine prevailing in Canaan drove his relatives into Egypt. There he had an opportunity of making himself known to those who had so grievously persecuted him; and his father, partly urged by necessity, and strongly impelled by parental affection, went down, with all his household, and settled in Egypt. This was the third generation from Abraham. The lapse of years swept them all away; and, according to the prediction, his "seed became strangers in a strange land." As it had been foretold, their bondage was most severe and cruel; and at the exact period of time fixed under the conduct of Moses, they were delivered from their servitude. Many years were spent in wandering through the wilderness, till at length the delay occasioned by their transgressions being removed, they obtained possession of Canaan. At this point are we arrived; and the inferences deducible from this series of history are obvious, and important. It is evident that HE "sees the end from the beginning," who predicted the establishment of the Israelites in Canaan, four hundred years before it took place, and at a time when every thing appeared to oppose the designs of Deity, and to conspire to shake the faith of Abraham. We have seen positive good arising out of apparent evil, and the purposes of God accomplished by the most unlikely instruments. We are certain, admitting the statement of facts as laid down in the scriptures, that there *is* a God



that ruleth in the earth; and that no hand, but the hand of Omnipotence, could have brought events so extraordinary to pass. We have seen every thing give way before a people conducted by the agency of Heaven; and are led irresistibly to conclude that the time, the manner, the instruments, were all selected, and ordained, by the most consummate wisdom. We are taught never to despair when we have a divine leader, never to murmur when events seem adverse to our expectations, never to waver when the promise appears remote in its accomplishment, and never to draw conclusions till Deity has completed his designs. If the consideration of these facts shall have strengthened the faith of one Christian, or furnished a single solution of the mysteries of Providence, we shall not have recited the Jewish history in vain.

A new path is marked out for us this evening. We have not to lead your attention through a long succession of historical events, so much as to enter into a necessary discussion of the government of the Jews, connected remotely with some general passages of their later chronicles, and immediately, with that great event, the building of their splendid temple, one of the wonders of the world: The subject stands thus worded in the list—**THE GOVERNMENT OF THE JEWS—INCLUDING THE THEOCRACY AND MONARCHY TO THE BUILDING OF SOLOMON'S TEMPLE;** to which we shall subjoin **A CORROBORATION OF SOME SUBORDINATE FACTS,** not of sufficient importance to demand a separate Lecture. We begin with,

### I. THE THEOCRACY OF THE JEWS.

An inquiry into the rise of government, and a survey of the gradual advance of power, is neither uninteresting, nor unnecessary, in the Lecture of this evening.

The first form of government appears to have been **THE PARENTAL**, and **THE PATRIARCHAL**. The father had a natural claim upon the affections and the obedience of his children. They were united to him by sacred and indissoluble ties. Man is not happy alone: in every period of life he stands connected with others; and his interests are linked with theirs. In society there must be a head, a leader, a guide, to whom the eye can look up, and upon whom the heart can rely. In the earliest state of nature man felt the force of this truth; and who could appear to him so suited for this office, and so capable of this responsibility, as the friend and the "guide of his youth?" Where could they select one so attached to their persons, to their interests, and to their general welfare? The bonds of nature were strengthened by those of the judg-

ment, and its obligations confirmed by choice. The decisions of the heart were ratified by the conviction of the understanding; and in those early ages, the characters of the parent, and of the patriarch, were blended. Their children yielded reverence to their age, attachment to their tenderness, and obedience to their requisitions. Then the parent was the priest, and the king, of his family. His wife, his children, his servants, all looked up to him as their natural and legitimate ruler, and his authority was not disputed. Behold him kneeling before the common altar, with hallowed hands stretched towards heaven, imploring family, and individual, mercies! Did the demon of discord creep in among them? and were the marks of dissatisfaction, alienation, and disunion imprinted upon their countenances? they laid their differences at his paternal feet, and from this decision they made no appeal. Providence conspired with nature to compel them to hold the will of a parent sacred; and the punishment of Cain, the disobedient and the murderer, would ever be before the eyes of the first race of mankind. Even in a later age, Esau, abandoned as he was to work all iniquity with greediness, and deterred by no sense of shame from the commission of evil, when he had it in his heart to murder his brother, resolved to wait till the days of mourning for his father should be accomplished, who apparently was gradually sinking into the grave. This fratricide in his heart, dared not to perpetrate his horrible design under the paternal roof, and before his father's face. The sons of Jacob, when they sold their brother, presumed not to enter into their father's presence, but with a tale to deceive him: they did not dare to risk the dreadful crime of bringing down his gray hairs with sorrow to the grave, openly and avowedly. And time aided these impressions of reverence which nature dictated, and Providence confirmed, and custom established. In that early period, when the years of a man's life were extended to so great a length, the exercise of parental authority reached to several generations. Paternal dignity acquired strength by years. The most tender affections were chastened by the most awful respect. The younger laid their hand upon their mouth, and were silent before venerable age; and they said, "Days should speak, and the multitude of years should teach wisdom." Blessed rule! which perpetually held in view the interests of those who voluntarily submitted to its directions. Blessed government! where the father was the prince, where parental affection softened patriarchal authority, and where filial love was blended with cheerful submission, and with respectful obedience. Blessed times! when the interests of men were one and undivided, and when no arbitrary and cruel despotism blotted the primeval reign. Happy

are those countries, which, like our own, approach the nearest to this picture of ancient simplicity in their government: where authority suppresses anarchy, where liberty limits power, and where the prince, consulting only the interests, reigns always in the hearts of his willing and obedient people!

As men multiplied upon the face of the earth, the relations of human life branched into various, and widely extended ramifications. The field of authority became every day larger; and in a family which once was one, but now was divided into many, some were found who would not bow to patriarchal restraint: of course, as in the present day, there were distinct heads to separate families, and a form of government was wanting which should embrace the whole. Here was a scene opened to ambition! The man of bold, daring, enterprising genius, pressed on to gain the dangerous summit of pre-eminence over his brethren. After the flood we first read of NIMROD. Whether he was a tyrant or not, according to our usage of the word, has been the subject of much discussion; and the scriptural account of him is too short to admit the question to be decided with any degree of precision. It is clear, however, that by some means he acquired a considerable ascendancy over his brethren; and "began to be great in the earth. He is the same with Belus, who was afterwards worshipped as a god under that name." He was the grandson of Noah, and is termed in the scriptures "a mighty hunter before the Lord." By this laborious exercise, probably, he gained the affections of the people, in delivering them from the dangers arising from the too great increase of beasts of prey; while, at the same moment, he trained up the young men to "endure hardness." The habitual command which on these occasions he assumed, and the habits of obedience which they acquired, probably, enabled him to establish, and to maintain the unbounded authority which he at length exercised. It is said that "he began to be mighty in the earth;" by which phrase we are probably to understand, that he procured himself settlements, founded cities, blended different families, united the people under his own authority, and moulded them into one state. His original dominion was bounded by the Euphrates and the Tigris: but in the revolution of years, and by gradual acquisitions, it was much enlarged, and became one of the four great empires of the world. Babylon was the seat of his kingdom: afterwards he built Nineveh, which he so denominated from his son Ninus, and laid the foundation of the Assyrian empire.\* Thus the PATRIARCHAL government became MONARCHICAL.

But men began to forsake the precepts delivered to them by their

\* See Rollin's *Anc. Hist.* vol. ii. p. 178, &c.



fathers, and to deny, or to forget the God who made them. The CONFUSION OF TONGUES separated and scattered the people, and this dispersion was the origin of nations. When idolatry had spread itself extensively, perhaps we might say universally, it pleased God to call Abraham, and to choose his family, and his descendants, as his own PECULIAR people. This nation was selected as a public evidence of the existence, and of the providence, of God—was set up as a perpetual admonition to the world. We have seen them crowned with visible prosperity under his extraordinary guardianship; and we have contemplated singular, and public manifestations, of the divine interposition in their favour. Should any be disposed to question the fact of this choice, and of this guardianship, they must be silenced by the demonstrations of the same providence, and of the same care, exerted in favour of the same people to the present hour. After a dispersion of eighteen centuries over the face of the whole earth, held every where in contempt, existing in a state of the most abject ignominy, they still remain, in incredible numbers, unmixed with, altogether subsisting in the midst of, all other nations, and totally distinct and separate from all the inhabitants of the globe. And while this undeniable fact is a decisive proof of the divine choice of them as a people, this extraordinary interposition of Heaven on their behalf, is also a standing miracle in favour of revelation. They have been harassed, detested, persecuted, massacred in all countries, by all ranks: yet have they seen the rise, and the fall, of many imperial nations, which held them in servitude, and which shook the oppressor's rod over their head; and in this forlorn, wandering, wretched, and apparently abandoned state, they remain a people, and a great people.

From this choice, and upon the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, arose the MOSAIC OR LEVITICAL DISPENSATION; and the government under this dispensation was a THEOCRACY. This term is compounded of two Greek words, Θεός *God*, and *κατέλω* *to govern*; and implies that the Jews were immediately under the authority of God as their king. To elucidate this assertion, we remark, that, in three distinct views, God may be considered as the God of the Hebrews:

1. *As the great Parent of all men*—the Ruler of the hearts, the properties, the lives, and the affairs of the creation at large, and of the Jews as a PART of the creation. This is a relation which he bears to them in common with all the world. Hence he required of the Israelites all the duties of the light of nature, and of the *moral* law, which binds all mankind as well as themselves, and extends through every dispensation.

2. *As the God of Israel peculiarly*, as a visible and outward CHURCH,

whom he had selected, and separated from all nations, to be his own peculiar people. Hence he prescribed forms and modes of worship: he instituted ceremonies and rites of religion, by which their devotional exercises were regulated, as tokens of their duty, and of his relation to them, as a chosen and distinct people.

3. *As their proper and only King*, as a NATION. Hence, he gave them judicial and political laws, relating to their government, their constitution, and the several relations and branches of society. Whoever will review with attention the Mosaic law, will find that there are not only moral obligations laid down, but ceremonial and ritual observances prescribed; and these again are connected with political and judicial commands: so that it is evident that the Jews were as much under the direction of Heaven in their civil, as in their religious laws and institutions. Hence there are four words, which are frequently deemed synonymous, but which, in the scriptures, have very distinct significations—"statutes, commandments, judgments, and testimonies"—and these set the several relations of God to the Jews, and particularly the theocracy, in a clear point of view.

"STATUTES," were such institutions as had their foundation in the will and pleasure of God as a *Sovereign*, and for which no particular reason on any other ground could be assigned: such as "not to sow two seeds of different kinds together."

"COMMANDMENTS," were *moral* duties, for which the reasons were manifest, such as "not to steal."

"JUDGMENTS," were the laws belonging to *civil* government, in things between man and man: such as are laid down in Exodus, the twenty-first and the following chapters.

"TESTIMONIES," were such laws as preserved the remembrance of some great events, and *testified* to the peculiar goodness of God: such as the sabbath, the passover, and all the feasts.

In giving his last charge to his son Solomon, David enumerates these several branches of divine jurisdiction: "Keep the charge of the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his STATUTES, and his COMMANDMENTS, and his JUDGMENTS, and his TESTIMONIES, as it is written in the law of Moses." And thus was the relation of God to Israel, not merely a common one, such as he bears to all men; but a peculiar one, such as he never had to any people, themselves excepted.

That such a connexion *did* subsist between God and Israel, is clearly deducible from the EPITHETS bestowed upon that nation, throughout the scriptures. Because he singled them out from all other nations, he is expressly said to CHOOSE them. "The Lord had a delight in thy fathers, and he *chose* their seed after them, even *you*, above all people."\*

\* Deut. x. 15.

In consequence of this selection, he brought them up out of the land of Egypt and they are said to have been DELIVERED,\* SAVED,† PURCHASED,‡ REDEEMED.§

He is said to CALL them: “When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and *called* my son out of Egypt.||

He is said to CREATE them, to GIVE THEM LIFE, to HAVE BEGOTTEN them.¶

He is called their FATHER. “Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise? is not he thy *Father* that hath bought thee? hath he not made thee, and established thee?”\*\*

These several scriptural terms imply a peculiar relation, a connexion far more intimate than the common relation of God to the creation at large, and totally distinct from it.

Under the theocracy, RULERS were appointed: but these were selected by God himself, as may be observed in respect of all the judges; and they did nothing but expressly under divine commission. In every movement, and in every plan, the will of God was consulted. The theocracy commenced with Moses, and closed with Samuel, after having subsisted through a period of four hundred and seventy-six years.

The rule of Samuel, as an elder of Israel, lasted twenty-one years, at the close of which time old age stole upon him, and wishing to relinquish the cares of government, or at least to divide them, a portion of his authority was vested in the person of his sons, and they became judges. So far from copying the inflexible integrity of their father, we find them delineated in all the features of covetousness and of oppression: they “took bribes,” and “perverted judgment.” For a season the Israelites patiently endured their wrongs: but at length their spirit was stirred within them to resist and to crush this tyranny. The blameless method of doing this, had been to make their appeal to their divine Monarch, and to have entreated Samuel, under the direction of Heaven, to elect other, and upright rulers. But, instead of this, they rejected the divine authority, so far as their power extended, they insisted upon an entire new form of government, and resolved, like other nations, to have “a king to reign over them.” Deity granting them their wishes, the theocracy ceased, and their government became monarchical.†† Our next object, in this Lecture, is to present some account of

\* Exod. iii. 8.

† Deut. xxxiii. 29.

‡ Deut. xxxii. 6.

\*\* Deut. xxxii. 6, &c.

§ Deut. vii. 8.

|| Hosea xi. 1.

¶ Is. xliii. 1. 7. Ezek. xvi. 3. Deut. xxxii. 18.

†† When we speak of the termination of the theocracy with Samuel, and at the commencement of the monarchy, we do not mean to insinuate, that the divine



## II. THE MONARCHY OF THE JEWS.

The princes of Israel possessed great power, and in later ages, before the coming of Christ, it was exceedingly abused, as in the case of Ahab, Manasseh, and several others.

It is evident that this change in the government was displeasing to God: for it is said, "He gave them a king in his anger, and took him away in his wrath;" and is it an inquiry worthy attention, what was the ground of this displeasure? I conceive that it was not the change of government as it respects the nomination of a king instead of a ruler, but the choosing of a king, so far as in their power, to the exclusion of God; and on this principle he said to Samuel, "They have not rejected *thee*, but they have rejected *Me*, that *I* should not reign over them." Their criminality consisted in placing a man on the throne of the Deity, and in exalting a creature to the seat, which had till that time, been occupied only by the Creator. Not any form of government is opposed in this declaration: but its force is directed against the presumption of the Israelites in rejecting a divine Governor. Their situation was peculiar—was unlike that of all other nations; and they were not at liberty, on just principles, to make so material an alteration in their government without first consulting God, and having the sanction of his authority. So far from consulting him, it appears, from the history, that they insisted upon having a king, in opposition to the divine will, and in defiance of all the consequences which Samuel foretold.

At the expiration of the theocracy, Saul was privately anointed king, and afterwards publicly proclaimed at Mizpeh. From the time of his anointing, to his death in Gilboa, he reigned over Israel forty years. It would not be consistent either with our purpose, or with the time usually allotted to these exercises, to enter into a

superintendence of the affairs of the Jewish nation ceased, or that God was less their governor, or that his relation to them was less intimate, and less peculiar, than before. The fact is, their very kings were merely rulers of a different description, subjected to the same control, and held by the same authority, as the judges under the theocracy. Hence, we see one rejected, and another chosen, one set up, and another cast down, and the hand of God every where, in the whole machine of the Israelites' government, directing, regulating, and giving impulse to every wheel, every spring, every movement. Nor has his peculiar relation to the Jews, his immediate superintendence of their concerns, and his miraculous guardianship of their persons, and of their interests, terminated to this hour. All that we mean to convey is, that the theocracy ceased to be the external and ostensible government of the Jews: that continuing to exist, it was in a different shape; and that, as it respects its form, their executive power became monarchical.

minute detail of the events of his reign. He drew upon himself the displeasure of God by disobeying his express command, in relation to the extermination of the Amalekites, whom he had, at the time when they opposed Israel in the wilderness, devoted to utter destruction. From this period to the end of his reign, he is presented to us as an object of pity! It is said, "The Spirit of God forsook him, and an evil spirit troubled him." It is probable that we are to understand by these terms, that the immediate direction which he was accustomed to receive from God was withdrawn—"The Lord answered him neither by prophets, nor by dreams:" that his wisdom and prudence forsook him: that he was subject to a wearing, melancholy disorder: that he was given up to his evil passions and inclinations; and that a spirit of envy, hatred, and cruelty, took place of a spirit of uprightness, candour, and mercy. Perhaps actual possession of an evil spirit, such as those so clearly proved in the days of Christ, is to be understood. Josephus so considers it, and describes its operations as superinducing a sensation of suffocation, resembling those emotions which the evangelists describe as attending demoniacal influences: at least a species of *madness* seems intended. David was early introduced at court; he had previously been anointed king in private in place of Saul; and while his amiable qualities, and his valour in vanquishing Goliath, drew upon him the affections of the people, they excited the fears, and the hatred, of the jealous monarch, who persecuted him even to the extremities of his kingdom, and aimed at nothing less than his destruction. While the father was seeking the life of this amiable young man, his son was attached to him by the most sincere affection, and "Jonathan loved David as his own soul." Never was the influence, the delicacy, the beauty of friendship, painted by so masterly a hand, as that of the sacred historian on this occasion. To read it unmoved, is to carry in one's bosom a rock of adamant, and not a heart of flesh; and to attempt to heighten its effect, would be as futile and as absurd as to think of adding brighter and softer colours to the radiance, with which the pencil of nature paints the west at sun-set.

Saul at length fell in the field of battle against the Philistines at Gilboa, and (Oh, the ravages of war!) in the same unhappy conflict, Jonathan perished also.\* It was upon this melancholy occasion, that his surviving friend wrote that affecting lamentation, which has been the admiration of ages.

"O beauty of Israel, slain upon thy own mountains! How are

\* See note 1, at the end of this Lecture.

the mighty fallen! Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon: lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph. Ye mountains of Gilboa, on you be neither dew, nor rain, nor fields affording oblations: for there the shield of the mighty is vilely cast away, the shield of Saul, the armour of the anointed with oil.\* From the blood of the slain, from the slaughter of the mighty, the bow of Jonathan was not withheld, and the sword of Saul never returned in vain. Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided: they were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions. Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, who clothed you in scarlet with delights, who put ornaments of gold on your apparel. How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle! O Jonathan, slain upon thine own mountains! I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan! very pleasant hast thou been unto me! Thy love to me was wonderful! surpassing the love of women! How have the mighty fallen! How have the weapons of war perished!"

David succeeded to the throne of his kingdom, and through a period of forty (or, if you reckon from the time in which he was anointed, forty-eight) years, he reigned beloved by the people, and distinguished by divine favour. Few characters discover so complete a combination of excellence and of defect as that of David. Yet, from first to last, you may trace the "man after God's own heart," humble, contrite, affectionate, and sincere! Few reigns have discovered greater fluctuations of triumph and of affliction. Amid the glory to which the Israelites were rising under his rule, and the zenith of which they had nearly attained, his life was chequered by trial. He was surrounded by enemies, and engaged in almost perpetual warfare. His domestic peace was destroyed, by the dishonour of his daughter, and by the slaughter of his son who effected it. He was driven from his kingdom by the rebellion of Absalom. A pestilence of three days ravaged his empire, and destroyed seventy thousand persons. And the last moments of a turbulent life, were disturbed, and embittered, by the conspiracy of his son Adonijah against Solomon, whom he had nominated as his successor.

Before his death, David had formed the design of building a temple to God, which was realized by Solomon. He had prepared most of the materials, had drawn up the plan according to Divine instructions, and left full and clear directions to his son respecting

\* See note 2, at the end of this Lecture.



it. We entreat your attention, for a few moments, prior to our enlargement on this purpose, till we bring down the monarchy to its close. In the days of Rehoboam, the kingdom of Israel was divided; and two distinct lines of kings succeeded to the thrones of Judah and of Israel. According to the prediction of Jacob, the "sceptre did not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from beneath his feet, till Shiloh came." The ten tribes of Israel were carried away captive, and have not been heard of from that time to this hour: but the sceptre remained with Judah to the coming of Christ. In the days of the Saviour the throne was filled by Herod, who held his power under the Roman emperor; and soon after the ascension of our Lord, the city of Jerusalem was taken, their temple destroyed, and they themselves dispersed. From that period, they have wandered over the face of the whole earth, "without a king, without a temple, without an ephod, without a lawgiver, without a sacrifice," and shall continue to do so, till they acknowledge Messiah the prince, and say—"Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!"

From the days of Jesus, the kingdom of David has been changed into a spiritual kingdom—a kingdom not possessing worldly splendour, neither supported by temporal power. It has resisted every attack, it has extended over many nations, it must swallow up every empire, it will diffuse itself wide as the world. We must contemplate briefly,

### III. THE BUILDING OF SOLOMON'S TEMPLE.

During the theocracy, the worship of God was conducted in a moveable tabernacle, constructed after the pattern drawn up by God himself, and communicated to Moses in the wilderness: nor was any change introduced into this mode of worship, till the prosperous and glorious reign of Solomon. Till the government of the Jews became an established monarchy, no ideas were entertained of a national temple. It rested with David to form, with the Deity to approve, and with Solomon to execute, this magnificent design. Neither labour, nor expense, were spared, in the erection of this grand building, confessedly the most splendid edifice upon which the sun ever shone. For a minute delineation of this stupendous work, we must refer you to the scriptures themselves; and we have little difficulty in confirming the fidelity of the sacred narrative on this subject. The fact of the existence and the grandeur of this edifice, is indisputable. It must have been known, while it was building, to all the world; for the report of such a design would spread through all nations. It was known at Tyre, because they

furnished workmen in the most beautiful and delicate parts of the structure. It was known to the queen of Sheba, who came to be an eye-witness of the wisdom and of the glory of Solomon. It was known at Babylon, by the report of the armies of Nebuchadnezzar. After Solomon's temple was built, the temple of Vulcan in Egypt, and others in different places, were founded in imitation of it: just as the oracles of the heathens were imitations of the divine communications made to Israel.\* The temple of Solomon, erected according to the scriptural account, must be admitted as an indisputable fact. The glory of this temple was soon extinguished; and after its destruction the Jews built another, inferior to the former in magnificence: which also has sunk under the ravages of war, and, with that whole dispensation, has yielded to a purer, yet less splendid, order of worship.

"Howbeit, the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands;" neither is his presence confined to a single world. To the limited capacity of man, a kingdom is a large possession, a world is an object of infinite importance. Could he ascend to the next planet, he would look down upon it as a shining spark, amid myriads of others, scattered through the regions of space. Were the presence of the Deity confined to this globe, who would renew the blunted horns of the moon? Who would balance yonder wandering worlds? Who would supply the sun with light? Who would feed the everlasting fires of those remote orbs, the suns of other worlds, and the centres of other systems? Who could diffuse glory and felicity through the heaven of heavens? That quickening presence, that powerful hand, that unsearchable wisdom, that unwearied goodness, that infinite Being, is needed every where at the same moment; is adored through all his works; is felt at the same time sustaining the whole universe; and surely "The Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands." It remains that we now corroborate,

#### IV. SOME SUBORDINATE SCRIPTURE FACTS—

To which, however interesting, we cannot afford, in our plan, the labour and time of a separate Lecture; and which may with propriety be noticed here.

We have passed over the book of Judges, because it was not immediately connected with the larger events proposed for consideration: but the facts contained in that instructive series of narration, are equally authenticated by foreign testimonies. It will be neces-

\* Bishop Watson's Theolog. Tracts, Vol. V. p. 27.

sary also to anticipate some other subordinate facts, subsequent in point of time to the subjects discussed this evening, that the thread of those which remain may not be broken, nor more serious and important inquiries interrupted.

The memorial of the actions of Gideon is preserved by *SANCHO-NIATHON*, a Tyrian writer, who lived not long after him, and whose antiquity is attested by *Porphyry*.

From the manner of *Jepthae's* devoting his daughter, after his victory over the Ammonites, arose the story of the sacrifice of *Iphigenia*: it being usual with the heathens, as *ÆLIAN* observes, to attribute to their later heroes, the glory of the actions of those who lived long before.\*

*OID* has transmitted to us the account of a feast observed by the ancient Romans in April, the time of the Jewish harvest; in which they let loose foxes with torches fastened to their tails.† Can we doubt that this certainly originated in the history of *Samson*? and that it was brought into Italy by the Phenicians? May we not also conclude, that from the treachery discovered in *Delilah's* treatment of *Samson*, arose the history of *Nisus*, and of his unnatural daughter, who cut off those fatal hairs from the head of her father, upon which his victory and his security depended?‡ The labours of *Hercules* appear to be but an imperfect copy of the prodigious strength and valour of *Samson*; or, at least, the facts related of the one, probably suggested the exploits fabled of the other.

Also, in the succeeding histories of Israel and Judah, some of the more extraordinary facts are confirmed by foreign testimonies.

The victory of *David* over the Syrians of *Zoba*, on the banks of the *Euphrates*, is preserved by *NICHOLAUS DAMASCENUS*.

There are monuments extant, which certify the part that *Hiram*, king of *Tyre*, took in building the temple of *Solomon*.

*HERODOTUS* records the taking of *Jerusalem* by the king of *Egypt*, as stated in the history of *Rehoboam's* reign. In the same writer may be traced the tradition of the destruction of *Sennacherib's* army, because of his blasphemies against God: which circumstance

\* *Æl. Variæ Historiæ*, lib. v. cap. 3.

† *Cur igitur missæ vinctis ardentia tædis  
Terga ferant vulpes, caussa docenda mihi.*

*Ovid Fast. lib. iv. l. 681, &c.*

‡ ——— *Alcathoe*, quam *Nisus* habet; cui splendidus ostro  
Inter honoratos medio de vertice canos  
Crinis inhærebat, magni fiducia regni.  
——— *Thalamos taciturna paternos  
Intrat; et (heu facinus!) fatali nata parentem  
Crine suum spoliât.*

*Ovid. Metam. lib. viii. l. 8—10, et 84—86.*



the Egyptians disguised, as was common with them, to appropriate it to themselves.\*

May we not also suppose that the story of Phaeton originated in some imperfect tradition of the translation of Elijah, in a chariot of fire? It is probable that imagination supplied the want of evidence, in the verses of the poets, and by their alterations and additions it is easy to account for the remoteness of their fables from this fact, to which, nevertheless, they possibly bear a first relation. But it is difficult to imagine from what other source the tale could arise, and what other event would afford materials for so singular a story.†

The history of Jonah, and the account that he was miraculously preserved three days and three nights in the bowels of a fish, has often excited the ridicule, and employed the wit, of infidelity; yet it is not without its support from heathen testimonies. This singular event is related by LYCOPHRON, and by ÆNEAS GAZEUS, with this variation from the inspired writings, that they call the prophet, Hercules. Neither are we to be surprised at this deviation from the historic veracity of the Bible; for Hercules was the great hero of the ancients: and Tacitus himself acknowledges, that to advance the fame of this distinguished favourite, they do not hesitate to ascribe to him, whatever is extraordinary or noble in history, to whomsoever the real praise is justly due. They plunder every other celebrated character of all his merit, to adorn their fabled hero with the spoils stolen from truth, and honestly belonging to others. Æneas Gazeus, in Theophrastus, uses these words—"Hercules was saved by a whale swallowing him, when the ship in which he sailed was wrecked."‡ How well these circumstances, in their general features, accord with the punishment of Jonah for his disobedience, and with the fearful tempest which preceded it!

MENANDER the historian confirms, in his acts of Ithobal, king of Tyre, the dearth in the days of Ahab, king of Israel, in which Elijah was miraculously preserved by the ravens, and by the widow of Zarephath, and says that by supplication to God it was followed by rain, and by much thunder.§

CYPRIAN, JULIAN, and others, mention the fire which descended from heaven to consume the sacrifice of Elijah.||

\* Herod. lib. ii. cap. 141.

† See, on these confirmations of scriptural truth, Bishop Watson's Theological Tracts, Vol. I. p. 355, 356.

‡ Ω'σπερ καὶ Ἡρακλῆς ἄδεται, διαρράγεισθης τῆς νεῶς ἐφ' ἧς ἔπλει, ὑπὸ κη-  
τος καταποθῆναι καὶ διατῶζεσθαι. Æneas Gazeus Theophrasto.

§ Jos. Antiq. Jud. Tom. I. lib. viii. cap. xiii. p. 578. Hudsoni edit.

|| Grot. de Verit. Rel. Christ. lib. i. sect. xvi. in not. 106. See also note 3, at the end of this Lecture.

It is unnecessary farther to enlarge upon these subjects: enough has already been produced, to prove to every unprejudiced mind, that the most trivial circumstances of the sacred narrative, even those parts of it which might not be supposed intimately and materially to affect the truth and the influence of Christianity, are capable of demonstration from the traditions of the heathen world, and from the testimony of their earliest writers.

Brethren, we have led back your attention to the splendour and magnificence of former times. Upon us "the ends of the earth" are come. The fathers are assembled in the world of spirits, and "they without us cannot be made perfect." We have not seen "Solomon in all his glory:" but "a greater than Solomon is here!" In all things Jesus has the pre-eminence. Was Solomon wise? Grace was poured upon the Saviour's lips, and he was fairer than the sons of men! Was Solomon mighty? "All power" is given unto Jesus "in heaven and in earth!" Was the dominion of Solomon extensive, and his reign peaceful and prosperous? "The dominion" also of Jesus is "from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth;" "and of his kingdom, and of his peace, there is no end." Is the renown of Solomon immortal? Of Jesus it is written, "His name shall endure for ever; his name shall be continued so long as the sun, and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed!" We have never beheld the magnificence of the temple of Solomon: but in the kingdom of our spiritual Solomon, is a temple not made with hands, where the armies of the redeemed are already congregated, and wait our arrival. Solomon was a servant, but Jesus is a son—"and let the whole earth be filled with his glory! Amen, and Amen."

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## NOTES.

**NOTE 1.**—It would have been foreign from the immediate object of the preceding Lecture, to have entered into any discussion of the appearance of Samuel to Saul: but I cannot forbear entering my individual protest against the opinions, either that the sorceress made some person in her interest personate the apparition of the prophet, or that some demon attempted such a personification. I believe that it was indeed the spirit of Samuel—and I shall subjoin, as the best illustration of my own views, the following able testimonies.

The ingenious writers of the *ENCYCLOPÆDIA BRITANNICA* reason thus:—

"Some have thought there was nothing more than a trick, by which a cunning woman imposed upon Saul's credulity, making him believe that some confidant of her own was the ghost of Samuel. But had that been the case, she would undoubtedly have made the pretended Samuel's answer, as pleasing to the king as possible, both to save her own life, which appears from the context to have been in danger, and likewise to have procured the larger reward. She

would never have told her sovereign, she durst not have told him, that he himself should be shortly slain, and his sons with him; and that the host of Israel should be delivered into the hand of the Philistines.\* For this reason, many critics, both Jewish and Christian, have supposed that the apparition was really a demon, or evil angel, by whose assistance the woman was accustomed to work wonders, and to foretell future events. But it is surely very incredible, that one of the apostate spirits of hell, should have upbraided Saul for applying to a sorceress, or should have accosted him in such words as these: 'Why hast thou disquieted me to bring me up? Wherefore dost thou ask of me, seeing the Lord is departed from thee, and is become thine enemy? For the Lord hath rent the kingdom out of thine hand, and given it to thy neighbour, even to David. Because thou obeyedst not the voice of the Lord, therefore the Lord hath done this thing to thee this day.' It is to be observed, farther, that what was here denounced against Saul was really prophetic, and that the event answered to the prophecy in every particular. Now, though we do not deny that there are created spirits of penetration vastly superior to that of the most enlarged human understanding; yet we dare maintain, that no finite intelligence could by its own mere capacity have ever found out the precise time of the two armies engaging, the success of the Philistines, the consequences of the victory, and the very names of the persons that were to fall in the battle. Saul and his sons were indeed men of tried bravery, and therefore likely to expose themselves to the greatest danger; but after the menaces which he received from the apparition, he would have been impelled, one should think, by common prudence, either to chicanery with the enemy, or to retire from the field without exposing himself, his sons, and the whole army to certain and inevitable destruction; and his acting differently, with the consequences of his conduct, were events which no limited understanding could either foresee or certainly foretell. If to these circumstances we add the suddenness of Samuel's appearance, with the effect which it had upon the sorceress herself, we shall find reason to believe that the apparition was that of no evil demon. There is not, we believe, upon record another instance of any person's pretending to raise a ghost from below without previously using some magical rites, or some form of incantation. As nothing of that kind is mentioned in the case before us, it is probable that Samuel appeared before he was called. It is likewise evident from the narrative, that the apparition was not what the woman expected; for we are told that when she saw Samuel, she cried out for fear. And when the king exhorted her not to be afraid, and asked what she saw, 'the woman said, I see gods (*elohim*) ascending out of the earth.' Now, had she been accustomed to do such feats, and known that what she saw was only her subservient demon, it is not conceivable that she could have been so frightened, or have mistaken her familiar for *elohim* in any sense in which that word can be taken. We are therefore strongly inclined to adopt the opinion of those who hold that it was Samuel himself who appeared and prophesied, not called up by the wretched woman or her demons, but, to her utter confusion, and the disgrace of her art, sent by God to rebuke Saul's madness in a most affecting and mortifying way, and to deter all others from ever applying to magicians or demons for assistance when refused comfort from Heaven. For though this hypothesis may, to a superficial thinker, seem to transgress the rule of Horace—*nec Deus intersit*, &c.—which is as applicable to the interpretation of scripture, as to the introduction of supernatural agency in human compositions; yet he who has studied the theocratical constitution of Israel, the nature of the office which was there termed regal, and by what means the administration was in emergencies conducted, will have a different opinion, and at once perceive the *dignus vindice nodus*."

*Encyclop. Brit. Vol. x. Pt. II. Art. MAGIC.*

Of the same opinion is the pious Mr. HERVEY—

"1 Sam. xxviii. 19.—On this place the DUTCH translator of the Meditations has added a note; to correct, very probably, what he supposes a mistake. On the same supposition, I presume, the compilers of our Rubric ordered the last verse

\* It was impossible that she could have prejudged the event of a battle, than which nothing is more uncertain.



of Eccles. xlv. to be omitted, in the daily service of the Church. But that the sentiment, hinted above," (an opinion coinciding with that just stated,) "is strictly true; that it was שמואל הווא SAMUEL HIMSELF, (not an infernal spirit, personating the prophet,) who appeared to the female necromancer at Endor; appeared, not in compliance with any diabolical incantation, but in pursuance of the divine commission; this, I think, is fully proved in the HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF THE LIFE OF DAVID, Vol. I. chap. 23."

*Hervey's Medit. Vol. I. p. 250, notes. Heptinstall's edit.*

These extracts refer to page 223, of the preceding Lecture.

NOTE 2.—In the translation of David's lamentation over Jonathan, I have not departed from the literal rendering of our own Bible, but where it appeared to me that the reading was amended or elucidated by the alteration. In rendering the 21st verse, "there the shield of the mighty is vilely cast away, the shield of Saul, the armour of the anointed with oil;" I have followed the translation of Dr. Geddes, who has the following note on the word "armour"—"From the small change of one letter into another, of a very similar form, arises this apposite rendering. Interpreters make a shift to translate the present text thus: *as if he had not been anointed with oil*. By what rules of translation I know not." His translation of this lamentation is singularly beautiful throughout. He renders the beginning of it—"O antelope of Israel! pierced on thine own mountains!" This rendering is correctly literal: but as the word צִבְיָה also signifies *ornamentum*,\* I have preferred the rendering "O beauty of Israel, &c.," as in the Lecture.

This note refers to page 224, of the preceding Lecture.

NOTE 3.—Testimony of Menander, the historian, to the drought in the days of Elijah, preserved by Josephus:

Μένονται δὲ τῆς ἀνομβρίας ταύτης καὶ Μένανδρος ἐν ταῖς Ἰδοβάλας τῆς Τυρίαν βασιλείας πρᾶττι, λέγων ὅτι· "ἀδροχία τε ἐπ' αὐτῆς ἐγένετο, ἀπὸ τῆς ὑπερβρεταίᾳ μηνὸς ἕως τῆς ἐχομένης ἔτις ὑπερβρεταίᾳ. ἵκεταιαν δ' αὐτῆς ποιησαμένης, κεραυνοὺς ἱκανῶς βεβληκέναι· ὅτος πόλιν Βότερυν ἔκτισε τὴν ἐπὶ Φοινίκῃ, καὶ Αὐζαί τὴν ἐν Λιβύῃ." Καὶ ταῦτα μὲν, δηλῶν τὴν ἐπ' Ἀράβῃ γενομένην ἀνομβρίαν, κατὰ γὰρ καὶ τῶτον καὶ Ἰδοβάλος ἐβατίλευσε Τυρίαν, ὁ Μένανδρος ἀναγέγραπεν. —Menander also notes this defect of rain, in the acts of Ithobal, king of the Tyrians, speaking thus: "There was a deficiency of rain from the month of October, until October in the succeeding year. But he, indeed, praying, there followed much thunder. He built the city of Botrys in Phenicia, and Auza in Lybia." And, certainly, he relates these things of the drought which happened in the time of Ahab, for, at that time, Ithobal did reign over the Tyrians, as Menander himself writes.

*Joseph. Antiq. Jud. Tom. I. lib. viii. cap. xiii. p. 378. Hudsoni edit.*

Testimonies of Julian and of Cyprian, quoted by Grotius, relative to the fire which consumed the sacrifice of Elijah. Julianus in libro Cyrilli decimo:

Προσάγειν δὲ ἱερεῖα βαμῶ καὶ θυεῖν παρητέσατε. πῦρ γὰρ, φησιν, ἔκαστειν ὥσπερ ἐπὶ Μωσέως τὰς θυσίας ἀναλίσκον· ἅπαξ τῶτο ἐπὶ Μωσέως ἐγένετο, καὶ ἐπὶ Ἠλίας τῆς Θεσπέτης πάλιν μετὰ πολλῶς χρόνου.—Vide et sequentia de igne caelesti; Cyprianus Testimoniorum III. "Item in sacrificiis quæcunque accepta habebat Deus, descendebat ignis de cælo qui sacrificata consumeret." Julian, in the tenth book of Cyril: "Ye refuse to bring sacrifices to the altar, and to present them, because that fire does not descend from heaven to consume the victims, as in the time of Moses. This happened, indeed, to Moses, and long after also to Elijah the Tishbite." See what follows, also, concerning the fire from heaven; Cyprian, in the Third of his Testimonies, says—"That in the sacrifices, whatsoever had acceptance with God, fire came down from heaven, which consumed the things offered."

*Grotius de Ver. Relig. Christ. sect. xvi. not. 106.*

These quotations refer to page 228, of the preceding Lecture.

\* See Taylor's Concordance on the word צִבְיָה.

## LECTURE XI.

## THE CAPTIVITIES OF ISRAEL AND OF JUDAH.

The first of these events is recorded in

2 KINGS XVII. 1—6.

In the twelfth year of Ahaz king of Judah, began Hoshea the son of Elah to reign in Samaria over Israel nine years. And he did that which was evil in the sight of the **LORD**, but not as the kings of Israel that were before him. Against him came up Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, and Hoshea became his servant and gave him presents. And the King of Assyria found conspiracy in Hoshea; for he had sent messengers to So king of Egypt, and brought no present to the king of Assyria, as he had done year by year: therefore the King of Assyria shut him up, and bound him in prison. Then the king of Assyria came up throughout all the land, and went up to Samaria, and besieged it three years. In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel away into Assyria, and placed them in Halah, and in Habor by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes.

The second is preserved in

2 CHRON. XXXVI. 14—21.

Moreover, all the chief of the priests, and the people transgressed very much, after all the abominations of the heathen, and polluted the house of the **LORD** which he had hallowed in Jerusalem. And the **LORD** God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling-place: But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the **LORD** arose against his people, till there was no remedy. Therefore he brought upon them the king of the Chaldees, who slew their young men with the sword, in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man, or maiden, or old man, or him that stooped for age: he gave them all into his hand. And all the vessels of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of the **LORD**, and the treasures of the king, and of his princes: all these he brought to Babylon. And they burned the house of God, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem, and burned all the palaces thereof with fire, and destroyed all the goodly vessels thereof. And them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon: where they were servants to him, and his sons, until the reign of the kingdom of Persia: To fulfil the word of the **LORD** by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths: for as long as she lay desolate, she kept sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years.

THE history of empires and of people transmitted from generation to generation, what is it but the record of the human heart?

All the scenes of horror which have petrified the spectator in the city and in the field, were drawn first in the imagination of a depraved spirit, before they were exhibited in the world. We contemplate with dismay a conqueror returning from the battle dyed in blood, and we shudder as we look upon the empurpled plain: but we carry within us, all the frightful passions which gave birth to these cruelties; and in our own bosom, are sown with unsparing hand, the prolific seeds, of which these tears and this misery are the sad harvest. The most atrocious acts of violence, which have disgraced society, were conceived in the bosom of a fellow-worm before they burst to light. The influence of depravity is felt in the world, but its spring is within us; and every individual bears his proportion of the hidden plague. In the existence of evil, and in the pressure of calamity upon society, we have the symptoms of it; the disease itself is interwoven with our very being, and lurks unseen, while it tyrannises unresisted in the human heart. The history of nations, therefore, is but the history of human nature; and it presents a most affecting view of human depravity.

It is the glory and the beauty of sacred history to make us acquainted with *men*, and to disclose to us human feelings. No artificial strokes are used in the delineation of character in this volume. No romantic unnatural circumstances, are recorded as belonging to the individual selected, to raise wonder and to lead captive the fancy: for, where miraculous events *are* asserted, we trace the finger of God, and are no longer surprised, and they bear all the marks of matter of fact, for which some cause is assignable. No false gloss varnishes a depraved disposition. No unreal splendours dazzle and astonish us. All is natural; and feeling ourselves among our brethren in the flesh, correspondent emotions spring up within us, when we perceive them agitated by grief or joy; and we read our own hearts, while the narrative permits us to look into theirs. Whether we are overwhelmed with the perplexities of kingdoms, or are occasionally called to the field of battle; whether we witness the slaughter of our fellow-men, or are involved in the intrigues and policies of worldly courts; or whether we enter the tranquil bosom of a family, and share their domestic comforts and trials, and read in these hallowed pages the same scenes which pass before our eyes every day that we live; we mark, with equal gratification and advantage, the development of the plans of Providence, in relation both to public and domestic life; and deduce from it some inferences applicable to the dealings of God, with us, as a nation or as individuals. Who can read the scriptures without feel-



ing that instruction and amusement are combined? Pleasure and religious information intermingle, and are blended. The imagination is captivated, the heart is warmed, the judgment is enlightened, the spirit is refreshed and invigorated.

"Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall," is an admonition of unerring wisdom, the excellence of which is proved in the blotted pages of human apostacy. We have seen Solomon building a house for God, enjoying a superiority of understanding over the whole human race, exulting in divine intercourse, crowned with riches and with honour, and extending his dominion from sea to sea. Fair is the aspect of piety, and we hang over it, unwilling to withdraw our enchanted attention from it! The morning of his day was unusually bright and promising: the moon became overcast; and in the evening of his life, his sun set enveloped with clouds, and shrouded by the most gloomy obscurity. It requires more than a common measure of grace to support uninjured the flatteries of prosperity: Solomon was inebriated with them, and fell from his exalted piety into folly, guilt, and consequent danger. Who does not weep to see the king of Israel, whose youthful wisdom drew a princess from her country to try the justice of his celebrity, bowing his hoary head to the dust before a dumb idol, and ascribing to the work of men's hands the glory and the worship due only to God? Son of the morning, how art thou fallen! The wisdom which distilled from his lips, which "spake of trees from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon, even to the hyssop which springeth out of the wall," and the penetration of which, pierced through the secrets of nature—O where did it slumber, when he forsook the Lord God of his father David, and "went after Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Zidonians, and Milcom, the abomination of the Ammonites?" How worthless is "the wisdom of the wise," when left to itself! and how easily does the power of temptation subdue the energies of the heart, and enslave the man, when the assisting hand of Heaven is withdrawn! The last days of Solomon formed a sad contrast to the lustre of his younger life. Blasted by vice, the fruits of the autumn but ill answered the promise of the spring. From the moment of his attachment to idolatry, he passed over to deserved oblivion: and having reigned in Israel forty years, "he slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David."

Rehoboam, his son, succeeded him, and, in his days, the kingdom was divided. Ten of the tribes of Israel followed Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and two only, Judah and Benjamin, adhered to the house of David. This division had been foretold, in the days

of Solomon, by Ahijah the Shilonite. From this period these kingdoms were totally distinct; and under the titles of Israel and Judah, they had a separate line of kings, and were even sometimes found at war with each other. It is not our design to enter into the history of the kingdoms thus separated: but we refer you to the books of the Kings, and of the Chronicles; which even in the estimation of skepticism, ought surely to have an equal degree of credit with the regular and authenticated records of any other country. The descendants of Abraham, thus divided, were punished by bondage for their transgressions, at two different periods, under different circumstances, in different places, with different consequences. The object of the present meeting is, to exhibit and to corroborate, THE CAPTIVITIES OF ISRAEL AND OF JUDAH.

### I. THE CAPTIVITY OF ISRAEL.

The bondage of the ten tribes took place in the ninth year of the reign of Hoshea, king of Israel, in the year of the world 3585, and seven hundred and twenty-one years before Christ. According to Josephus, they were removed out of their country "nine hundred and forty-seven years after their forefathers were brought out of the land of Egypt; eight hundred years after Joshua had been their leader; and two hundred and forty years, seven months, and seven days, after they had revolted from Rehoboam."\* It was begun in the days of Pekah, king of Israel, and completed by Shalmaneser, king of Assyria. Shalmaneser took Samaria after a siege of three years. Hezekiah was at that time in the seventh year of his reign over Judah. Hoshea was taken alive; the government of the Israelites was completely overthrown; the people were transported into Assyria, Media, and Persia, and other nations, out of Cuthath, Ava, Hamath, and Sepharvaim, were brought into Samaria, and took possession of the country which had belonged to Israel. These are the Samaritans, against whom the Jews bore particular hatred, and who did not fail to return it: for when the Jews were in prosperity they were willing to be thought in some way allied to them, but in their adversity always disowned them. And thus they availed themselves of the favour which Alexander showed the Jews when he visited them, and professed to descend from Ephraim and Manasseh, the sons of Joseph.† But so rooted and so permanent was their mutual enmity, that this opposition raged most furiously in the days of our Lord: so that the woman was surprised that he

\* Joseph. Antiq. Jud. lib. ix. cap. 14. See note 1, at the end of this Lecture.

† See Joseph. Antiq. Jud. lib. xi. cap. 8.

“being a Jew, should ask water of her, who was a woman of Samaria;” and it is added, “for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans;” and we find one of their villages, on another occasion, refusing to receive the Saviour, “because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem.”

The ostensible cause of this captivity was as follows: Hoshea, on an invasion of Samaria by Shalmaneser, in an early part of his reign, had bought him off by presents, and declared himself to be the servant of the king of Assyria. On these humiliating terms, Shalmaneser withdrew his armies from him, and Hoshea was permitted to hold the crown of Israel in subordination to him. After this compact between them, Hoshea secretly conspired against him; and sending to So, king of Egypt, for assistance, withheld the annual tribute to Assyria, designing to shake off the yoke which Shalmaneser had imposed. This monarch, termed So, in the words read at the commencement of this Lecture, is called Setho by Herodotus; and is the famous Sabachon of Diodorus Siculus, and of other profane writers, who dethroned and murdered Boccharis, the king of Egypt, in the beginning of the reign of Hezekiah, and seized upon the kingdom. Shalmaneser coming to the knowledge of this conspiracy, advanced with a powerful army against Hoshea, shut him up in Samaria, and afterwards took him, and the Israelites, captive.

Of the existence, and the enterprising disposition of Shalmaneser, we have the evidence of Menander the historian, when he wrote his chronology, and translated the Tyrian Chronicles into the Greek language. This is his testimony, preserved by Josephus—“Eluleus reigned thirty-six years. This monarch, upon the revolt of the Citteans, sailed against, and reduced them. Against these did the king of Assyria (Shalmaneser) send an army, and invaded all Phenicia. At length he made peace with them, and returned. But Sidon, Ace, Palatyrus, and several other cities, revolted from the Tyrians, and surrendered themselves to the king of Assyria. Now, when the Tyrians refused to submit to him, he renewed the contest; and the Phenicians furnished him with sixty ships and eight hundred rowers. The Tyrians opposed him with twelve ships, dispersed his armament, and took five hundred men prisoners. He renewed the struggle, however, and placed a garrison over their rivers and aqueducts, to prevent them from drawing water: during which period the Tyrians sustained the siege, and drank the waters of the wells which they digged upon this emergency.”\*

\* Menand. apud Joseph. Antiq. lib. ix. chap. 14. See note 2, at the end of this Lecture.



This testimony is produced to show that profane historians confirm the character which the scriptures give of Shalmaneser; and it decidedly proves that he was formidable to all his neighbours.

Who can read these narrations of blood-shed, without deploring the evil of falling into the hands of an unprincipled tyrant? The designs of God against Israel did not clear Shalmaneser from guilt. He was an instrument to bring about the purposes of Deity without his concurrence, and even without his knowledge. He meant only to satiate his ambition at the expense of the fortunes, the liberties, and the lives of his contemporaries; and his treatment of other nations, unconnected with the Israelites, demonstrates too clearly the tyranny of his disposition. The history of man furnishes us with many a lamentable evidence, that he is not to be trusted with absolute power, that he grows intoxicated with it, and that possessing it, he plunges either himself or others into an abyss of ruin and misery. In proportion as he is furnished with the means to effect much, he does mischief; as those beasts of the forest are most to be dreaded, which have the most strength united with their sanguinary dispositions. Where much power is possessed, much good might be done. How many thousands of hearts might one man make happy! He might suppress the vicious, and strengthen the weak, and comfort the sorrowful: he might be as God, dispensing peace, and joy, and order, around him in society. But, alas! he no sooner feels his exaltation than he grows giddy with it! He no longer recollects that he is himself a man, in the midst of those who are "bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh." Half the world must worship him: and the other half, who will not, must be visited with "a rod of iron." He values not the soul of his brother: he cares not how many lives he expends to gratify his ambition, his hatred, or his passions. Society groans under his tyranny, and the world is turned into a field of blood. See yonder unjust man, whose character will be read in his history before we close this Lecture, setting up an image of gold, and commanding on pain of death a whole empire to worship it! What gave birth to this extravagance? The intoxication of power! And are his threats merely the language of caprice and anger? No! but yonder are three men dragged to the fire to be burned, because they refuse to comply with a command, from which their religion, their conscience, and every thing which they ought to hold most dear, revolt. That man might be a sun to quicken, to warm, and to illumine: but he is a meteor that scorches, terrifies, and blights, whatever falls under his baneful influence.

How different is the character of the Deity! When I appear be-

fore a great man, his object often is to dazzle and to overwhelm me. He is anxious only that I should feel his greatness and my own inferiority. He clothes himself with all his power, and enjoys my embarrassment. No matter whether millions of people are made unhappy by his pride; he is careless whether he is loved, so that he is but feared. I turn away with horror and disgust from a man whose breath is in his nostrils, living but to confound and to torment, to HIM in whom all majesty and might centre—and there I lose my apprehensions! HE, who rules above all, in the plenitude of power, who is King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, blends with infinite strength, illimitable compassion. The spirit that shrinks with dismay from the frowning, forbidding aspect, of an imperious fellow-worm, is invited to the feet of his Creator, not more by the mild and affectionate language of scripture, than by the experience which he has had of his gracious character, in the mercies which he has personally received at his hand. His majesty astonishes, but does not confound. His glory dazzles, but does not consume. His power fills the mind with awe, but does not overwhelm it with terror. Ah, David was right, when, in his great strait, he preferred falling into the hands of God rather than into the hands of man; and the history of this night proves his wisdom. Yet did the Israelites choose a man before God, and elevated a creature to the throne previously filled only by the Creator!

The most remarkable circumstance attending the captivity of Israel, is THE LOSS OF THE TEN TRIBES. We hear nothing more concerning them, excepting a few who returned with Judah and Benjamin from the Babylonish captivity; and the general opinion respecting them is, that they were absorbed in the nations among whom they were dispersed. Of this opinion are Josephus and St. Jerome. Others object, that their return from captivity appears to be plainly pointed out by Amos, and by Hosea. “I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof: they shall, also, make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall be no more pulled up out of the land which I have given them, saith the LORD thy God.”\* Hosea also says, “Then shall the children of Judah, and the children of Israel be gathered together, and appoint themselves one head, and they shall come up out of the land; for great shall be the day of Jezreel.”† The first of these prophecies relates to the “rearing of the tabernacle of David,”

\* Amos ix. 14, 15.

† Hosea i. 11.

which surely was done by Judah and Benjamin, and appears more decidedly to refer to them, since the ten tribes had disavowed any connexion with the house of David at the time of their separation. Upon the answer returned by Rehoboam, they replied to the king, "What portion have we in David? Neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse! To your tents, O Israel! Now, see to thine own house, David!"\* In the second, I confess, Judah and Israel are mentioned separately, yet conjointly, because of the co-operation ascribed to them. May we not suppose this prediction fulfilled in the return of the Levites, the remnant of Israel, who were brought from Babylon with the men of Judah and of Benjamin? Who united with them under one leader, and who assisted them in building the wall of Jerusalem? We leave the question to the decision of your own judgments. Indeed, it does not immediately come before us as a subject of discussion; our professed object being simply to confirm the fact of the two captivities, and to relate the circumstances attending them. There is no record of their return, there are no traces of their tribes, there is no evidence of their existence. Those who maintain that they are yet in being, advance only an hypothesis incapable of demonstration; and the most general conclusion upon the subject is, we believe, that they are wholly lost.

The inferences which we deduce from this position are these:—

1. That the coming of the Messiah was the grand object of the Old Testament dispensation, and that the peculiarities of the Jews bore a manifest relation to him. To decide this, it is only necessary to observe, that from the time of the promise made to Adam, the Saviour was the subject of all the engagements between God and man. The study of genealogies, and the strictness with which they were commanded to be kept, were enjoined, we may presume, that they might trace with certainty and decision, the line of the Messiah. The ceremonies of the Jewish religion were evidently types of something: as they were expressly instituted by God, it must follow that the antitype should be sublime, that these rites might be worthy their great founder: and no meaning can be affixed to them, unless they be allowed to refer to the life, the sufferings, and the atonement of the Lord Jesus. The prophecies, at that early period, looked forwards to the Saviour: and they increased in clearness and in copiousness, as they approached the advent of the Messiah. The separation of the Jews from all other nations, was founded, we conceive, upon this same principle. Hence we infer,

\* 1 Kings xii. 16.



2. That the very existence of the Jews depended upon their connexion with the Saviour. Till the days of David, the promises respecting the Messiah were of general import, that he should descend from Abraham. But then they became more explicit, and it was declared that Christ should be of the house of David. To the family of David, therefore, the promise was restricted. So long as they adhered to, and were connected with, the house of David, which was also the house of Jesus, they were separated with their brethren from the rest of mankind, and their existence was secured: but when they voluntarily resigned their interest in that house, and were severed from the two tribes, they were dispersed and absorbed among the nations, and the few who returned from captivity lost their distinction: they returned with Judah and Benjamin, and were swallowed up of their brethren. Now, it is remarkable that individuals were supported in the same way. Lot, so long as he stands in union with Abraham, who was inseparably connected with the Messiah, is an object of importance: but once divided from him, we read little of him afterwards, and at length he totally vanishes out of our sight. Judah and Benjamin, who were of the house of David, were also led into captivity; but they were restored, *because* of their connexion with the Messiah: while Israel, having become separated from this great interest, were scattered and lost. These observations will not, we trust, be deemed altogether unimportant; as they prove the unity of the scriptures, and the connexion between the Old and the New Testaments. But we hasten to fix your attention upon

## II. THE CAPTIVITY OF JUDAH.

This captivity was commenced by Nebuchadnezzar, and completed by his general, Nebuzaradan. The interval between the first desolation of Jerusalem by the king of Babylon, and its total overthrow by his servant, was about twenty-two years. It was begun in the reign of Jehoiakim, six hundred and six years before the coming of Christ. Nebuchadnezzar took the city in the ninth month, called Casleu, which answers to our November, and on the twelfth day of the month: which the Jews keep as an annual fast in commemoration of this event to this day.\* Among the number of captives taken from Jerusalem, were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: whom the Babylonians called Belteshazzar, Shadrach,

\* See Prideaux's Connec. Vol. I. b. 1. Anc. Univ. Hist. Vol. IV. b. i. c. 7, note O. Usher sub. A. M. 3397.

Meshach, and Abed-nego. The interval between the commencement, and the consummation, of the destruction, of Jerusalem, is crowded with important transactions, a few of which it may be necessary to mention.

The reading of the roll before Jehoiakim, who was not rendered sensible of his wickedness by the first desolation of his country, excited the most infuriate emotions, and having first cut it in pieces with his own hand, he threw it into the fire. The Jews keep also the twenty-ninth day of Casleu a fast, in remembrance of the impiety of the monarch, by whom this important writing was consumed.

In the seventh year of Jehoiakim, and the second after the death of the father of Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel explained the first vision of the king of Babylon, which elevated him to the highest dignities of the empire.

The other events recorded in the book of Daniel, to the expulsion of Nebuchadnezzar from society, followed in the order in which they are there narrated, and conduct us to the total overthrow of Jerusalem by Nebuzaradan, in the reign of Zedekiah: which was accompanied with the most horrible circumstances of rigour and cruelty. The temple was spoiled of all its riches and furniture, and was burned, together with the royal palace. The slaughter was dreadful: the city was totally dismantled: and the whole of its inhabitants, who escaped the sword, were led into captivity. This event took place in the year of the world 3718, five hundred and eighty-eight years before Christ, and one hundred and thirty-four years after the destruction of the kingdom of Israel, and the captivity of the ten tribes.

Nebuchadnezzar having, at length, sheathed the sword, applied himself to the completion of his works at Babylon. As it will be necessary to relate the siege of this city by Cyrus, which terminated the captivity of Judah, it will be proper previously to give a short description of this wonderful place. The city stood upon an immense plain, and formed a complete square. The most remarkable works in, and about it, were the walls, the temple, the palace, the bridge, and the banks of the river, and the canals for draining it.

1. THE WALLS. They were in thickness eighty-seven feet: in height three hundred and fifty: in compass four hundred and eighty furlongs, or about sixty miles. This is the account given by Herodotus, the most ancient writer upon this subject, who was himself at Babylon. Each side of the city was defended by a wall fifteen miles in length. These walls were built of bricks, cemented with bitumen, a glutinous slime, resembling pitch, found in abundance in that country, which binds together much more firmly than slime, and, in

time, becomes harder than the bricks or stones themselves. They were surrounded by a vast moat, filled with water. On every side of this immense square were twenty-five gates, amounting, in all, to one hundred, and as many bridges were thrown across the moat which encircled the city. These gates were all made of solid brass; and for this reason: when God promised to Cyrus the conquest of Babylon, he said, that he would "break before him, *the gates of brass.*" At proper intervals, towers were erected all along the walls, each of them being about ten feet higher than the walls themselves. It seems, however, that this is to be understood only of those parts of the walls where towers were needful for defence: when three towers were between every two of the gates, and four at the four corners: but some parts of the walls, being upon a morass, and inaccessible to an enemy, were not thus defended; and the whole number of the towers was two hundred and fifty. This economy, destroying the symmetry of the city, the deficiency was afterwards supplied by Nitocris.\* From the twenty-five gates on each side of the city, were twenty-five streets, extending, in a straight line, to the corresponding gates on the opposite side, directly intersecting each other at right angles: so that there were fifty streets, each of them fifteen miles long, dividing the whole city into six hundred and seventy-six squares, each square two miles and a quarter in circumference. The ground enclosed within these squares, was formed into gardens.

The next objects worthy attention were,

2. THE BRIDGE, AND THE BANKS OF THE RIVER. A branch of the Euphrates ran through the centre of the city from north to south. On each side of the river were a quay, and a high wall, built of brick and bitumen, of the same thickness with the walls which surrounded the city. In these walls, over against every street that led to the river, were also gates of brass, and from them were descents, by steps, to the river. These brazen gates were always open in the day, and shut by night. The bridge thrown over it in the middle of the city was a magnificent structure, a furlong in length, and thirty feet in breadth. Nor must we omit

3. THE CANALS for draining the river. In the beginning of the summer, the sun melting the snows on the mountains of Armenia, a vast overflow of the Euphrates takes place in the months of June, July, and August. To prevent any damage to the city and its inhabitants, at a considerable distance above the town, were cut two artificial canals, which turned the course of the waters into the Tigris before they reached Babylon. For additional security, two immense banks were raised on each side of the river. In order to form these

\* Anc. Univ. Hist. Vol. IV. b. 1, c. 9, p. 408 and 434. Dublin edit. 1745, 20 vol.



mounds it was necessary to drain off the water ; which was done by digging a prodigious lake forty miles square, one hundred and sixty in circumference, and thirty-five feet deep.

These are the wonders recorded by ancient writers, concerning Babylon ; and which almost exceed credibility, were it not that their testimony on this subject perfectly coincides with itself. Berossus, Magasthenes, and Abydenus, agree in ascribing these works to Nebuchadnezzar.\*

4. THE PALACE, THE HANGING GARDENS, AND THE TEMPLE, were respectively splendid and magnificent : but as they are not necessary to our subject, we waive a description of them. It is agreed by most historians, that the temple of Belus was built on the plan of the tower of Babel, and is by some supposed to be erected on its ruins. Josephus says that Babylon took its name from Babel, a word implying confusion, in commemoration of the confusion of language, and the dispersion of the people.† This temple was higher than the highest pyramid of Egypt.‡ From the situation of Babylon, in a clear atmosphere, and a serene sky, together with the advantage of this immense elevation, arose the superiority of the Chaldeans in astronomical studies. The description of this immense city, which has now been submitted to you, was necessary, that you may understand the nature of those operations adopted by Cyrus in obtaining possession of it.

We are not to wonder that the heart of Nebuchadnezzar, the irresistible conqueror, and the lord of Babylon, was inflated with pride. Where there is not a principle of religion to counteract the influence of human depravity, the power of a lofty spirit admits of no restraint. But “pride is high unto destruction ; and a haughty spirit goeth before a fall.” Nebuchadnezzar ascribed to the power of his own arm, the glory and the majesty of his kingdom ; and the Deity punished him, by driving him from human society. He would be a god, and he became less than a man.§ His humiliation had been predicted in a vision, explained to him by the prophet Daniel, a year before it took place.|| The five following considerations may, perhaps, tend to confirm this event, as an historical fact.

1. It is circumstantially related in a decree which Nebuchadnezzar issued upon his restoration to his kingdom : which decree must have existed at the very time when the scriptural account was written ; admitting (which we may reasonably claim) that the event was

\* For this, and a more enlarged account of Babylon, see Rollin's *Anc. Hist.* Vol. I. p. 188, &c. *Anc. Univ. Hist.* Vol. IV. b. 1, c. 9. Prideaux *Connec.* Vol. I. pt. i. b. ii. p. 133—148. Herod. l. 1, c. 178, &c.

† Josephus de *Antiq. Jud.* Tom. I. lib. i. cap. 4. Hudsoni edit.

‡ For a general description of it, see *Anc. Univ. Hist.* Vol. II. b. i. c. 9, and Vol. I. b. i. c. 2. See, also, note 3, at the end of this Lecture.

§ Dan. iv. 29—33.

|| Dan. iv. 4, &c.

recorded at the time which it asserts, and possesses the antiquity ascribed to the book of Daniel: therefore, imposition was impossible, and the attempt among contemporaries would only have exposed the writer to derision. It is not the relation of a transaction previous to his birth, which Daniel has written, but he was an eye-witness of the circumstance, an actor in the scene, and the whole Jewish nation, as well as the Babylonish empire, were concerned in it.

2. Scaliger thinks that this madness of Nebuchadnezzar is obscurely hinted in a fragment of Abydenus, preserved by Eusebius\*—wherein, having, from the testimony of the Chaldean writers, represented the king to have fallen into an ecstasy, and to have foretold the destruction of that empire by the Medes and Persians, he adds—"Immediately after uttering this prophecy, he disappeared," which Scaliger supposes refers to the deposition of his kingly authority, and to his exclusion from society.

3. Herodotus speaks of his pride, and of his defiance even of divine power, in much the same terms as those used by the inspired writer. He says—"Such was his loftiness and presumption, that he boasted it was not in the power of God himself to dispossess him of his kingdom, so securely did he deem himself established in it."†

4. Josephus asserts this event: and, amid all his numerous opposers, and their diversified objections, the relation of this fact by him was never disputed.‡

5. By Ptolemy's canon, a contemporary record, Nebuchadnezzar is said to have reigned forty-three years, eight of which are passed over in silence. His actions, as recounted both by sacred and profane historians, are so remarkable, and his spirit so enterprising, that it can scarcely be imagined that he should be inactive during eight years, or that his achievements in that period should be buried in oblivion. The conclusion is in favour of the record of Daniel, that he was excluded from society for seven years, till he learned to acknowledge the hand which had made him great, and to ascribe all power to God.§ Of the reign and the works of Nebuchadnezzar, Josephus has preserved the testimonies of Berosus, Megasthenes, Diodorus, and Philostratus.

BEROSUS, in the third book of his Chaldaic histories, says—that "his father died at Babylon, after having reigned twenty-one years: that Nebuchadnezzar was, at that time, absent in Egypt; but having received the intelligence of his father's death, he arranged his affairs abroad, and committing the care and transportation of the *Jews*, Sy-

\* Euseb. Præp. Evang. lib. ix. cap. 41.

† Herod. lib. 2.

‡ Joseph. de Anti. Judeor. Tom. I. lib. x. cap. 10.

§ See Prideaux's Connec. Vol. I. b. 1, in locum.

rians, Egyptians, and Phenicians, to his friends, to follow him with his army and carriages to Babylon, he himself, with a few men, hastened thither, and took upon himself the government of the empire." Again, he adds, "With the spoils of war, he most magnificently decorated the temple of Belus—he enlarged the old city—built within it a triple wall—erected a magnificent palace"—and so he goes on to speak of the hanging gardens, and of his other operations. "MEGASTHENES, in the fourth book of his Indian history, mentions this garden, and asserts that Nebuchadnezzar surpassed Hercules in valour, and in the greatness of his exploits." "DIOCLES, in the second book of the Persian history, and PHILOSTRATUS, in the history of India and Phenicia, say that he besieged Tyre thirteen years, and took it in the reign of Ithobal."\*

To Nebuchadnezzar succeeded Evil Merodach, who set Jechoniah at liberty and made him one of his friends. After a reign of vice and folly of two years, he was slain by the conspiracy of his own family.

To him succeeded Neriglasser, who reigned only four years, and was slain in a battle against Cyrus.

To him succeeded Belshazzar, with whose life the Babylonish captivity terminated. Cyrus, conducted by an invisible hand, advanced gradually towards Babylon, and closely besieged it: while Belshazzar, or, rather, Nitocris, the queen-mother (for the character of Belshazzar, by all profane historians, is, that he was wholly addicted to sensual pleasures, which is abundantly confirmed by the scriptural account,) as strenuously fortified and defended it. This conqueror surrounded the city with his army: but the king of Babylon, presuming upon its impregnable strength, and upon the magazine of provisions, which, without any fresh supplies, less than a ten years' siege could not exhaust, derided the efforts of his powerful adversary. In the mean time, the besiegers encompassed the city with a deep trench, keeping their purposes a profound secret; and Cyrus was informed of the feast which was about to be held in Babylon. Upon this night he determined to suspend the fates of his army, and of the empire for which he fought. On this occasion of festivity, Belshazzar, with a bold impiety, at which his predecessors, proud and daring as they were, would have shuddered, profaned the vessels of the temple of Jehovah. The apparition of a hand, writing on the wall of the palace, in unknown characters, first excited the apprehensions of the king. In vain he called the astrologers and the magicians: in vain

\* Joseph. de Antiq. Jud. Tom. I. lib. x. cap. 11. Hudsoni edit. See, also, note 4, at the end of this Lecture.



he alternately threatened and entreated them: they could neither read the writing, nor make known the interpretation. The sentence was written in Samaritan characters, which the Chaldeans did not understand; and could they have deciphered these, they could not have explained them. The words, literally rendered, are, "He hath numbered, he hath numbered, he hath weighed, and they divide." Daniel was sent for, and announced from them the immediate fall of his empire. While this was the state of things at the palace, Cyrus had drained the river into his moat, till it was fordable. Informed of the confusion which reigned in the city, he issued orders to his troops to enter it that very night at north and south, by marching up the channel. They were commanded by two eminent officers, and advanced towards each other, without suffering any impediment, till they met in the centre of the river. God, who had promised to open before him the gates of brass, preceded them: otherwise, this singular and adventurous expedition must have failed. Had the gates which closed the avenues leading to the river been shut, which was always the custom at night, the whole scheme had been defeated. But so was it ordered by Providence, that on this night of general riot and confusion, with unparalleled negligence, *they were left open!* So that these troops penetrated the very heart of the city without opposition, and reached the palace before any alarm was given. The guards were immediately put to the sword—Belshazzar slain—and the city taken almost without resistance.

Thus fell the Babylonish empire. Cyrus made a decree in favour of the Jews, which led to their restoration; and thus terminated the captivity of Judah, after a period of seventy years.\* They returned to their country, and rebuilt their city and their temple: and while the young men shouted when the foundation was laid, the elders wept aloud because of its manifest inferiority to the magnificence of the former building: "So that they could not discern the noise of the shout of joy, from the noise of the weeping of the people!"

The history which has passed before you this night, discovers with what facility the Deity can dry up the streams of our enjoyment, and even cut off the supplies of our existence. He has only to speak the word, and a thousand instruments spring up to execute the fierceness of his displeasure. He has only to give the command, and the air which we breathe, becomes the vehicle of instantaneous death. Fire mingles with the blast of the desert, and consumes the vitals.† The pestilence "walketh in darkness," or flying

\* See note 5, at the end of this Lecture.

† See note 6, at the end of this Lecture.

through the slumbering city, shakes poison from its deadly pinions. He holds back the face of his sun, and the "heavens are black with wind and rain," a partial deluge covers the country, and the promise of the harvest is cut off. Or he commands his winds to scatter the clouds, to drive them to some more favoured land, and the corn, expecting in vain the early and the latter rain, withers and perishes. The earth is cleft with the heat, the herds die through lack of water, the sun-beam beats upon the man's head, till he faints, and his tongue cleaves to the roof of his mouth, and he is brought down "to the dust of death." The desolation sometimes suddenly arises. There is peace in the city: the harvest is swelling to maturity: every heart rejoices in the security of its comforts. A cloud rises in the east, and extends till it hides the sun at noon-day. A noise is heard in the air, which covers "every face with blackness." An army of locusts descends: and the land which was "as the garden of Eden before them, behind them is a desolate wilderness." Sometimes the same desolation is effected at a stroke by the earthquake: at others, war thunders in the heart of an empire, and blood runs down the streets of a city.\*

The conduct of Nebuchadnezzar is fruitful also in instruction. We frequently see the worst of characters filling the most eminent situations, moving in the most exalted and the most splendid spheres, ruling over powerful empires, exalting his throne above the stars of heaven: a luminary that dazzles the eyes of the princes of this world: a meteor that perplexes, confounds and terrifies the inhabitants of the earth. Nations bow down, one after another, to the iron yoke, till the whole world is subjected to him. Elevation of rank in society, is so far from being bestowed upon the most worthy, and the most upright characters, that these situations, so full of danger, and which require so much wisdom, are frequently seized by violence, obtained by birth, procured by partial favour, and are often permitted by Providence to be occupied by men, at once destitute of principle, and of religion, the true source of principle. When we consider to whose hands the government of mighty empires has been committed: when we examine the history of the great monarch of Babylon: when we trace the sceptre of power, alternately under the control of Greece and of Rome, and read the lives of monsters, whose delight it was to trample upon every social feeling, and to violate the rights of humanity, (to exclude modern history from our calculation) it must be confessed, and it is recorded in human blood, that in many instances "the earth" has been "given into the hand of the wicked."

\* See note 7, at the end of this Lecture.

But the power of the wicked is limited. 'Heaven is above all, yet.' He who permits, can and does restrain the exertion of their power. To every thing there is a limit. The ocean has its boundaries over which it cannot pass. The winds are not suffered to rage with fury uncontrolled. The planets, and even eccentric comets, have their prescribed orbits. The meteor has the point of its elevation, and the moment of its fall, and of its expiration assigned it. And He who gave, can recall the power of the oppressor; and dreadful will be his responsibility for the abuse of it!

When war is awakened, the judgments of God are abroad in the earth. Thus have we seen to-night a people distinguished for their religious privileges, for their prosperity, and for their separation from all other nations, devoted to destruction because of their transgressions. Let us learn, that whenever the sword is permitted to devour, it is to chastise the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity. War is horrible in its nature, and in its effects. It separates the dearest and the closest connexions of human nature. One battle renders thousands of wives, widows: thousands of children, fatherless: thousands of parents, childless: thousands of spirits ruined beyond redemption! See, pressing into yonder slippery, empurpled field, throngs of all ages, seeking their own among the dead! In this disfigured countenance the child discerns with difficulty the features of his father. In that mangled body dwelt the spirit which was the prop and the glory of yonder silvery head, now bowed down over it in silent, unspeakable sorrow. There the widow washes the wounds of her husband with tears. And how few of that dreadful list of slaughtered men were fit to die! Surely war was let loose upon the world as a curse in the just anger of God.

Let us seek, therefore, a better state of existence. Let us deem it no longer a hardship, that we are "pilgrims and strangers upon the earth:" but let us "confess it" with cheerfulness, and look for a "city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." Let us turn away from the kingdoms of this world, laid open to the hand of violence, and seek a shelter under the government of Deity, from all present, and from all future evil. Let us press forwards to his immediate presence, to live there in a state of rest, a state of holiness, a state of felicity, a state of permanency, a state of immutability.



## NOTES.

**NOTE 1.**—Calculation of Josephus respecting the era of the captivity of Israel—noticed, and translated, in page 235, of the preceding Lecture.

Μετωκισον εν αι δέκα φυλαί τῶν Ἰσραηλιτῶν ἐκ τῆς Ἰσδαίας μετὰ ἐτῶν ἀριθμὸν ἑκατοσίων τεσσαράκοντα ἐπὶ ἅ, ἃ ὅ ἐ χρόνος τὴν Αἴγυπτον ἐξεληθόντες αὐτῶν οἱ πρόγονοι τὴνδε κατέσχον τὴν χώραν ἀπὸ δὴ στρατηγυγντος Ἰηστ ἐτῶν ὀκτακοσίων. ἃ ὅ ἔ δὲ ἀποσπῆντες ἀπὸ Ροδῶμας τῆς Δαυίδας υἱῶν τὴν βασιλείαν Ἱεροδοῶμαρ παρέδοσαν, ὥς μοι καὶ πρότερον δεδῆλωται, ἐτὴ ἐσσι διακόσια τεσσαράκοντα, μηνες ἐπὶ ἅ, ἡμέραι ἐπὶ ἅ.

*Jos. de Antiq. Jud. Tom. I. lib. ix. cap. 14. Hudsoni edit.*

**NOTE 2.**—Testimony of Menander to the character and acts of Shalmaneser, preserved in Josephus, and translated in page 236, of the preceding Lecture.

Καὶ Ἑλλαῖος ὄνομα ἐδασίλευσεν ἔτη τριάκοντα ἕξ. ἔτος, ἀποσπῆντων Κιτταίων, ἀναπλεύσας, προσηγάγετο αὐτὸς πάλιν. ἐπὶ ταύτης πέμψας ὁ τῶν Ἀσσυρίων βασιλεὺς, ἐπῆλθε Φοινίκην πολεμῶν ἅπασαν. ὅς τις σπεισάμενος εἰρήνην, μετὰ πάντων ἀνεχώρησεν ὀπίσω. ἀπέστη τε Τυρίων Σιδῶν καὶ Ἀκχ καὶ ἡ πάλαι Τύρος, καὶ πολλαὶ ἄλλαι πόλεις, αἱ τῶν τῶν Ἀσσυρίων ἑαυτοὺς βασιλεῖ παρέδοσαν. διὸ Τυρίων εἰς ὑποταγέντων πάλιν ὁ βασιλεὺς ἐπ' αὐτὸς ὑπέσπρεψε, Φοινικῶν συμπληρωσάντων αὐτῶν ναῦς ἐξήκοντα, καὶ ἐπικώπας ὀκτακοσίας. αἷς ἐπιπλεύσαντες οἱ Τύριοι ναυσὶ δεκάδου, τῶν νεῶν τῶν ἀντιπάλων διασπαρείσαν, λαμβάνοντιν αἰχμαλώτας ἄνδρας εἰς πεντακοσίας, ἐπετάθη δὴ πάντων ἐν Τύρῳ τιμὴ διὰ ταῦτα, ἀναξεύζας δ' ὁ τῶν Ἀσσυρίων βασιλεὺς κατέστησε φύλακας ἐπὶ τῆς ποταμῆς καὶ τῶν ὑδάτων, ὃ διακαλύπτουσι Τυρίους ἀρύταται· καὶ ταῦτο ἔτεσι πέντε γενομένου, ἐκατέρησαν πίνοντες ἐκ φρεάων ὀρυκτῶν.

*Jos. Antiq. Jud. Tom. I. lib. ix. cap. 14. Hudsoni edit.*

**NOTE 3.**—The following description of the temple of Belus is extracted from the writers of the Ancient Universal History, Vol. I. book i. chap. 2, p. 417. Dublin edit. 1745. It is necessary to mention the edition when a reference is made to the page, because there are several editions which differ materially in this respect. This passage refers to page 243, of the preceding Lecture.

“Herodotus tells us, it was a furlong in length, and as much in breadth; and Strabo determines the height to have been a furlong, that is, the eighth part of a mile, or six hundred and sixty feet, which is itself prodigious; for thereby it appears to have exceeded the greatest of the Egyptian pyramids in height, one hundred and seventy-nine feet, though it fell short of it at the base by thirty-three. It consisted of eight square towers one above another, gradually decreasing in breadth; which, with the winding of the stairs from the top to the bottom on the outside, gave it the resemblance of a pyramid, as Strabo calls it. This antique form, joined to the extraordinary height of the structure, easily induces us to believe it to be the same tower mentioned by Moses; Nebuchadnezzar finishing the design, which the sons of Noah were obliged, by the confusion of tongues, to leave unexecuted.” And again they add, in a note, “The words of Herodotus are: Ἐν μέσῳ δὲ τῶν ἑσθ' πύργος σφισιν οἰκοδομεῖται, σταδίῳ καὶ τὸ μήκος καὶ τὸ εὖρος, καὶ ἐπὶ ταῦ τῷ πύργῳ ἄλλος πύργος ἐπιβέβηκε, καὶ ἕτερος μᾶλλον ἐπὶ ταῦ, μέχρις οὗ ὅτ' ἄρ' ὀκτώ πύργων. In the midst of the temple a solid tower is built, of a furlong in length, and as much in breadth; and upon this tower another tower is erected, and another again upon that, and so on to the number of eight towers. It is true, the word *μήκος* which we here translate *length*, may also signify *height*: but some authors having thence supposed, as the construction seems to require, that the first tower was a furlong high, and concluding the other seven to be of equal height, have made the whole a mile high; to avoid which extravagant consequence, it seems more reasonable to understand Herodotus as we

have rendered the passage, unless the furlong be taken for the height of all the eight towers." And it appears to me that the construction of the passage will not allow this last conclusion: for whether the word *μηκος* be rendered *height* or *length*, it evidently refers to the *first* tower; and it is expressly said that "another was built upon this"—and so on. I conclude, therefore, that these words of Herodotus refer to its length and its breadth, without adverting at all to its height, which Strabo says was also a furlong. According to this last mentioned author, it was exactly a furlong every way.

NOTE 4.—Testimonies of Berossus, Megasthenes, Diocles, and Philostratus, respecting the reign, the exploits, and the works, of Nebuchadnezzar, preserved in Josephus, and translated in page 245, of the preceding Lecture.

Ταὶ δὲ πατρὶ τῷ Ναβυχοδονοσόρῳ συνέβη, κατ' αὐτὸν τὸν καιρὸν ἀρρίωσθησαντι, ἐν τῇ Βαβυλωνίᾳ πόλει μεταλλάξαι τὸν βίον, ἔτη βασιλεύσαντι εἰκοσίην, αἰσθόμενος δὲ μετ' ὁ πολὺν χρόνον τὴν τῶ πατρὸς τελευτὴν Ναβυχοδονοσόρῳ. καὶ καταστῆσας τὰ κατὰ τὴν Αἴγυπτον πραγματὰ καὶ τὴν λοιπὴν χώραν, καὶ τὰς αἰχμαλώτας Ἰσθαίων τε καὶ Φοινίκων καὶ Σύρων καὶ τῶν κατὰ τὴν Αἴγυπτον ἐθνῶν, καὶ συντάξας τισὶ τῶν φίλων μετὰ τῆς βασιλείας δυνάμεως καὶ τῆς λοιπῆς ἀφελείας ἀνακομίζειν εἰς τὴν Βαβυλωνίαν, αὐτὸς ὁρμήσας ὀλιγοσύνῳ διὰ τῆς ἐρημίας παρεγένετο εἰς Βαβυλῶνα.—And again, Αὐτὸς δ' ὑπὸ τῶν ἐκ τῆς πολέμου λαφύρον τό, τε τῶ Βηλῶ ἱερὸν καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ κοσμήσας φιλοτίμως, τὴν τε ὑπάρχουσαν ἐξ ἀρχῆς πόλιν, καὶ ἑτέραν χαρισάμενος, &c. &c.—Such is the language of Berossus. Then for the others, Josephus adds—Καὶ Μεγασθένης δὲ ἐν τῇ τετάρτῃ τῶν Ἰνδικῶν μνημονεύει αὐτῶν, δι' ἧς ἀποφαίνειν πειρᾶται τῶτον τὸν βασιλεῖα τῇ ἀνδρείᾳ καὶ τῷ μεγέθει τῶν πράξεων ὑπερβηκότα τὸν Ἡρακλέα.—Καὶ Διοκλῆς δὲ ἐν τῇ δευτέρᾳ τῶν Περσικῶν μνημονεύει τῶν τῶ βασιλέως καὶ Φιλόστρατος ἐν ταῖς Ἰνδικαῖς αὐτὲ καὶ Φοινικικαῖς ἱστορίαις, ὅτι ὁ αὐτὸς βασιλεὺς ἐπολιόρκησε Τύρον ἔτη ιγ. βασιλεύοντος κατ' ἐκείνον τὸν καιρὸν Ἰσοδῶλος τῆς Τύρου.

Joseph. Antiq. Jud. Tom. I. lib. x. cap. xi. p. 459, 460. Hudsoni edit.

NOTE 5.—Seventy years had been predicted as the term of the captivity of Judah. Some have computed from the fourth year of Jehoiakim to the first issuing of Cyrus' decree. Others from the destruction of Jerusalem to the publication of Darius' decree, in the fourth year of his reign. The discussion of this point is immaterial: since, either way, seventy years were accomplished.

The writers of the Ancient Univ. Hist. date it from the first taking of the city in the reign of Jehoiakim, and they say, in a note, "This Usher proves to have happened in the ninth month, from the anniversary fast, which the Jews have kept ever since in memory of that calamity. This is the more worth observing, because the seventy years' captivity, foretold by Jeremiah, must be reckoned from this epocha."—Confirmation of page 246 of the preceding Lecture.

NOTE 6.—The following description of the Simoom is giving in Bruce's Travels, Vol. 6, p. 461, 462. Edinburgh, 8vo. edit. of 1804. He says that an "extreme redness in the air was a sure presage of the coming of the simoom." And his conductor through the desert warned him and his servants "that upon the coming of the simoom," they "should fall upon their faces with their mouths upon the earth, so as not to partake of the outward air, as long as they could hold their breath." And he thus describes its fearful approach and effects. "At eleven o'clock, while we contemplated with great pleasure the rugged top of Chiggre, to which we were fast approaching, and where we were to solace ourselves with plenty of good water, Idris cried out with a loud voice, "Fall upon your faces, for here is the simoom!" I saw from the south-east a haze come, in colour like the purple part of the rainbow, but not so compressed or thick. It did not occupy twenty yards in breadth, and was about twelve feet high from the ground. It was a kind of blush upon the air, and it moved very rapidly, for I scarce could turn to fall upon the ground with my head to the northward, when I felt the heat of its current plainly upon

my face. We all lay flat upon the ground, as if dead, till Idris told us it was blown over. The meteor, or purple haze, which I saw, was indeed passed, but the light air that still blew was of heat to threaten suffocation. For my part, I found distinctly in my breast that I had imbibed a part of it, nor was I free of an asthmatic sensation till I had been some months in Italy, at the baths of Poretta, near two years afterwards."

This extract illustrates the remark in page 246, of the preceding Lecture.

**NOTE 7.**—We do not sufficiently consider under whose direction are the desolations of the earth, and by whose permission the hero conquers. Jeremiah awfully unveils the cause of Judah's and Israel's calamities, when he says, "The Lord was an enemy: he hath swallowed up Israel, he hath swallowed up all her palaces: he hath destroyed his strong holds, and hath increased in the daughter of Judah mourning and lamentation. And he hath violently taken away his tabernacle, as if it were of a garden, he hath destroyed his places of the assembly: the Lord hath caused the solemn feasts and sabbaths to be forgotten in Zion, and hath despised in the indignation of his anger the king and the priest."

*Lamentations*, ii. 5, 6.

And this reminds me of a most beautiful passage in Virgil, in which the poet represents the deities engaged in the subversion of Troy.

Hic ubi disjectas moles, avulsaque saxis  
Saxa vides, mistoque undantem pulvere fumum,  
Neptunus muros, magnoque emota tridenti  
Fundamenta quatit, totamque à sedibus urbem  
Eruit. Hic Juno Scæas sævissima portas  
Prima tenet, sociumque furens à navibus agmen  
Ferro accincta vocat.  
Jam summas arces Tritonia, respice, Pallas  
Insedit, nimbo effulgens, et Gorgone sæva.  
Ipse Pater Danaïs animos, viresque secundas  
Sufficit, ipse Deos in Dardana suscitât arma.

*Virg. Æneid. lib. ii. v. 609—619.*

"Here, where you behold bulwarks cast down, and stones rent from stones, and waving smoke mingling with dust, Neptune shakes the walls, and the heaving foundations, with his great trident, and overthrows the whole city from its bases. There, Juno, the most inexorable, occupies the Scæan gates, and girded with a sword, calls the raging army of the allies from their ships. Then behold Tritonian Pallas sits upon the highest citadels, effulgent on a cloud, and with her terrible ægis. Jupiter himself supplies courage, and renewed forces, to the Grecians; himself stirs up the gods against the Trojan arms!"

This note relates to page 247, of the preceding Lecture.



## LECTURE XII.

THE LIFE, DEATH, RESURRECTION, AND ASCENSION OF JESUS CHRIST,  
PROVED AS MATTERS OF FACT.

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## LUKE II. 1—7.

And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Cesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria. And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, (because he was of the house and lineage of David :) to be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him in swaddling-clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

## 1 COR. XV. 3—8.

For I delivered unto you first of all, that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins, according to the scriptures: and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day, according to the scriptures: And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve. After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once: of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.

## 2 PETER I. 16.

For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty.

THERE is a certain degree of sublimity in which we feel gratified, and the emotions which it excites are pleasing as well as awful: but beyond that—the sensation becomes painful and oppressive. As my eye explores the azure vault of heaven, I contemplate with solemn delight worlds moving there, suspended without any known or visible support: yet I should tremble if a rock of ice, which would be but as a grain of sand in comparison of these, hung over

my head. The reason why I feel no terror in beholding bodies so immense quivering upon nothing, is, that they are too remote to excite apprehension, and distance has so diminished them, that I lose the conception of their magnitude. I gaze with pleasure upon the proud elevation of the lofty mountain, as I stand at its foot: but I shudder to approach the brink of a precipice of equal depth: the one excites in me an impression of the sublime—the other appears to risk my personal safety. So nearly allied are the emotions of sublimity and terror, that the one sometimes rises into the other! An earthly monarch does well to borrow all possible splendour, and to array himself in all the ensigns of royalty, in order to impress the spectator with an idea of majesty: and scarcely are we impressed, after all! We see humanity tottering under that weighty grandeur, and feel that we are in the presence of *but* a man. The Majesty of heaven needs no such appendages. Decked in his mildest radiance, no mortal vision could endure the insufferable splendour; and we have seen him, when all ideas of sublimity were absorbed and lost in the stronger emotions of terror. We can only behold him at a distance without fear: whenever he approaches us, whatever veil he may spread over his uncreated glory, we are overwhelmed with the presence of Deity.

We cannot contemplate God in any point of view, through the medium of revelation, without being sensible of his perfections. If his mercy speak in whispers, soft as the breath of the morning, or grateful as the gale fanned by the wings of the evening, every passion sinks to rest, every tumultuous feeling subsides, and we are lost in wonder, in love, in ecstasy. If his justice thunder in the heavens, the commotions of listening nations are suspended: and men and angels acknowledge, in silent awe, the justice of his dispensations. In making requisition for sin, and requiring its expiation by blood, his conduct may be inexplicable to our present imperfect apprehensions; nevertheless, we are assured, that “it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.” O how unlike is He to the most perfect of human characters! The wisdom of Solomon yielded to the strength of seduction: the piety of David, to the force of temptation: the integrity of Abraham, to the impressions of terror: and there never appeared on the face of the earth a perfect character, till “the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.” But Deity is always equal to himself—and appears alike great in terror and in mildness, in mercy and in judgment, in pardoning and in punishing.

We have lately seen him in the thunder and the lightning of Sinai: we are now to contemplate him in the stillness and the tranquillity of Calvary. In this latter form he is more endeared to us, as sinners saved by grace: but he is equally great in both. The righteous law, which was pronounced with an audible voice, out of "the thick darkness where God was," is a beautiful transcript of the purity of his nature: and the melancholy scenes of Calvary present a fine illustration of the harmony of his perfections. The first dispensation was temporary: the types, which were the shadows only of good things to come, have disappeared: the ceremonial law waxed old: and its institutions, having received their accomplishment, vanished. A new and immutable dispensation, more simple, more spiritual, more enlarged in its nature, followed: we still repose under its shadow; and it looks forward to eternity for its fulness, its glory, and its completion.

In reviewing years which are passed by, we are necessarily involved in difficulties. The destroying hand of time obliterates many a page of history: and the more remote the age to which our attention is directed, the more oppressively heavy hangs the cloud of oblivion over it. We have surmounted the larger portion of these difficulties; and as we return to later generations, the cloud slowly rolls away. We have gradually advanced from obscurity to the dawn of the morning—we have seen the gates of light open upon us—and darkness has reluctantly yielded, to the rising radiance of that day, which is now hastening to its meridian.

The subject of the present Lecture is, **THE LIFE, DEATH, RESURRECTION, AND ASCENSION OF JESUS CHRIST, PROVED AS MATTERS OF FACT.**

We are not now to relate facts which took place at the infancy of time, in some remote empire, long since dismembered, and its very name consigned over to oblivion: but the events which we defend transpired under the immediate sway of imperial Rome, at the zenith of her power, and when her dominions comprehended half the globe. Her standard had been planted in remotest Asia: her emperors bestowed or displaced the diadems of neighbouring states at their pleasure: their eagles had stretched their wings over the sea, and alighted upon the fields of Britain, then esteemed and denominated "the ends of the earth;" and while polished nations endured her yoke, the savage barbarian trembled at her name in the inaccessible wilds of his native forest, and the sons of the north fled to their cloud-encompassed mountains, and crouched concealed amid the mists which crept along their summits.

It is singular that, at this period, the whole world were in ex-



pectation of some grand and impending event. Not only were the descendants of Abraham looking for the "Desire of all nations," but a general tradition was in circulation, and a general impression prevailed, that some extraordinary personage was about to make his appearance. This is not hinted obscurely, but the expectation is stated openly and fairly, by many of the most considerable writers of that age, both poets and historians, Suetonius,\* and Tacitus,† had stated a common opinion that "the East should prevail." To this extraordinary expectation, awakened and kept alive, we may reasonably impute the journey of the Magi, whose curiosity had been excited by the appearance of an unknown star differing in motion and in all other respects, from the orbs which ordinarily revolve in the heavens. Of this, however, we shall feel it our duty to speak more at large hereafter. As a confirmation of our assertion, respecting the sentiments entertained at that singular period, we cannot resist the inclination which we feel, to translate a part of the most celebrated eclogue of Virgil, which he calls *Pollio*—beyond comparison the most elegant, and deservedly the most admired production of all antiquity. It was written about forty years before the birth of our Saviour. It was composed probably to compliment Marcellus, the nephew of Augustus by Octavia; but we trust that you will perceive parts in it, which can be strictly applicable to no mortal reign, however glorious: you will deem it probable that he has borrowed his most sublime images from the prophecies, with which he might be acquainted through the medium of the Greek translation; and the whole is a specimen of the general expectation of the world, just previous to the advent of our Lord.

"Sicilian Muses, let us attempt more exalted strains! The last era foretold in Cumæan verse is already arrived. The grand series of revolving ages commences anew. Now, a new progeny is sent down from lofty Heaven. Be propitious, chaste Lucina, to the infant boy—by him the iron years shall close, and the golden age shall arise upon all the world. Under thy consular sway, Pollio, shall this glory of the age make his entrance, and the great months begin their revolutions. Should any vestiges of guilt remain, swept away under thy direction, the earth shall be released from fear for ever; and with his Father's virtues shall he rule the tranquil world. The earth shall pour before thee, sweet boy, without culture, her smiling first fruits. The timid herds shall not be afraid of the large, fierce lions. The venomous asp shall expire, and the

\* Suetonius in *Vespasiano*, cap. 4.

† Tacitus, *Histor. lib. v. cap. 13.*

deadly poisonous plant, shall wither. The fields shall become yellow with golden ears of corn: the blushing grape shall hang upon the wild bramble; and the stubborn oak shall distil soft, dewy honey.——Yet still shall some vestiges of pristine vice remain: which shall cause the sea to be ploughed with ships—towns to be besieged—and the face of the earth to be wounded with furrows.—New wars shall arise—new heroes be sent to the battle—But when thy *maturity* is come, every land shall produce all necessary things, and commerce shall cease. The ground shall not endure the harrow, nor shall the vine need the pruning-hook. As they wove their thread, the Destinies sang this strain—‘Roll on, ye years of felicity!’—Bright offspring of the gods! thou great increase of Jove! advance to thy distinguished honours! for now the time approaches! Behold, the vast globe, with its ponderous convexity, bows to thee!—the lands—the expansive seas—the sublime heavens! See, how all things rejoice in this advancing era! Oh! that the closing scenes of a long life may yet hold out, and so much fire remain, as shall enable me to celebrate thy deeds!”\*

So sublimely sang the Roman bard: but Isaiah struck a deeper chord, and in strains still more elevated announced the coming Saviour. “Righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed, their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice-den. They shall not hurt, nor destroy, in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.”† “For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle-tree.”‡

Nor was the state of the world at that period less singular, than were the expectations of the different nations. The bloody portal of war was closed: the gates of the temple of Janus, always open in a time of contest, were shut; the commotions of all empires had subsided, and the whole earth enjoyed a profound tranquillity, propitious

\* See note 1, at the end of this Lecture.

† Is. xi. 5—9.

‡ Is. lv. 12, 13.

to the Saviour's mild and peaceful sway, and characteristic of it. This was the fifth time that these gates had been closed from the foundation of the city of Rome; and the peace, which was universal, continued without interruption for *twelve* years.

Augustus, at this time, had issued a decree, that all persons under the Roman dominion should be registered, according to their respective provinces, cities, and families. Joseph and Mary, on this occasion, were called to the city of David, from their obscure village, to which, as being of his lineage, they originally belonged, that they might be registered among those who were of the same family. And thus the mighty monarch of the Roman empire, was induced by an invisible power, whom he knew not, whom he served not, to enact a novel and general decree, to bring from their obscurity a poor, unknown family; that he who came too humbly to be acknowledged, might not lose an iota of evidence to his character and to his mission; and that the prophecies should be fulfilled which had asserted that "the ruler of Israel" should come out of "Bethlehem!"

A variety of conjectures have been formed respecting this tax. Some have asserted,\* others have denied,† a universal enrolment. It is not necessary, indeed, that any other taxation than that of Judea, should be supposed, which will account for the silence of ancient historians upon the subject.—The original word‡ does not necessarily imply "all the world," but may be rendered "all the land"—referring to the whole of Israel, and comprehending those parts which have been dismembered from the body, and distributed among the descendants of Herod the Great; and Galilee, the country of Joseph, among them. It may be necessary also to observe, that we are not to take the term "*tax*" in the sense usually affixed to it: a *duty* levied upon the people: for it simply implies here a *register*, or *enrolment*. It should also be remembered, that Herod, although called king of Judea, was dependent upon the Roman emperor, and tributary to him: consequently, such an enrolment might be made, in virtue of a decree of Augustus, and yet be deemed no infringement upon the rights of these subordinate rulers. Josephus speaks of an oath of allegiance to Herod and to Augustus, which his countrymen took about this time; and it is more than probable, that he means the same thing with that which Luke states under the de-

\* Prideaux's Connec. Vol. IV. pt. ii. b. ix.

† Lardner—Cred. Vol. II. c. 1.

‡ οἰκισμένη.



nomination of a register. The time of this enrolment is stated to be when "Cyrenius was governor of Syria."\*

Upon this occasion came Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem. The immense conflux of people had filled all the inns, and all the houses of public reception; so that they were compelled to lodge in a stable, where the mother of Jesus was delivered of the Saviour of the world! The inns of the East, at this day, are large square buildings usually only one story high, with a spacious court in the centre of them. Into this court you enter through a wide gate, and on the right and left hand, you perceive rooms that are appointed as lodgings for travellers. Those that come first take the rooms which they prefer; but must provide themselves both with a couch and provision: for the rooms are perfectly naked, and contain no sort of furniture whatever.

"My kingdom is not of this world," said the Saviour: and he spake a truth capable of many and decisive evidences. His very entrance into the world announced it. It would ill have become him, who was to converse with every possible scene of misery, to have made his appearance amid the shouts of thousands prostrate before him. No palace supported by columns of marble, and perfumed with the incense of Arabia, sheltered his holy head. No vestments of purple interwoven with gold, shaded his tender limbs. No bending attendants received the weeping babe from his mother's arms. No trumpet was blown through the regions of Judea to declare the birth of "the King of the Jews," or to announce the expectations of the heir to the throne of David. The world frowned upon him from the beginning. Poverty was the handmaid who waited upon him at his BIRTH, as scorn followed him through all his days. The Saviour and the brute reposed under one common roof, and were driven to the same shed. Even then, when he first opened his eyes upon the light, their meek intelligence seemed to say, "My kingdom is not of this world!"

Yet was he not destitute of honour. Heaven acknowledged the sovereign whom man rejected. When the First-begotten was brought into the world, it was said, "Let all the angels of God worship him." They hastened to announce the "glad tidings" to "sheperds keeping watch over their flocks at night." They sang, "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will to men." They became the first preachers of the gospel. On that memorable night, amid their "constellations," they proclaimed the event,

\* In Lardner's Cred. Vol. II. c. 1, the reader may find an inexhaustible fund of criticism and sound learning, upon this circumstance.

———"As earth asleep, unconscious lay,  
And struck their spangled lyres!"

Nor is this relation more remarkable than that which follows, and which is well attested by the authority of other writers. Strangers from the East, of no mean lineage, and of no mean attainments, came inquiring, "Where is he who was born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the East, and are come to worship him." A few inquiries are necessary, in order to illustrate and to establish this fact.

1. WHO WERE THESE STRANGERS? They are called "wise men," or Magi.\* Some have thought that they were magicians. Indeed, in this sense only, it appears, the original word is used in other parts of the scriptures. Simon the sorcerer is so called: so also is Elymas. If they are to be considered in this light, then were the instruments of Satan turned against him: they foreboded the shaking of his empire, and acknowledged the dawn of that day, when "he fell as lightning from heaven:" and they are the first fruits of the Saviour's victory over the agents of darkness. We are disposed, however, to accord with our translators, and to affix another interpretation to the term, by considering them as scholars. The Magi of the Persians were priests as well as philosophers: the expounders of their laws, human and divine: nor would they suffer any man to be a king, who was not first enrolled among the Magi. This fact, probably, gave rise to the tradition of the Roman church, that they were kings. It is evident that they were Gentiles; and these are the first pledges of the rending of the veil: of the breaking down the wall of partition; and of the abolition of the distinctions which had so long existed between the Jew and the Gentile. They were also "*wise men*:" men not easily deceived. Well acquainted with the face of the heavens, and with the bodies of light which revolve there, they were not drawn from their native country to Jerusalem, without a conviction that the appearance upon which they gazed was an extraordinary one, and that the light which they followed portended some great event.

2. WHAT WAS THIS STAR? It was not one of those stars which have been from the beginning of the creation, either regular or erratic: otherwise it had not been an indication of any thing new. When they said, "We have seen *his* star," the most natural construction which we can put upon the words is, that they then beheld it for the first time. It differed, in every respect, from all the heavenly bodies in the known planetary system. They shine with an

\* *Mágoi.*

equal blaze: this, probably, had a superior lustre. They are distant, and move remotely through the fields of ether: this was nearer the earth, that it might answer the purpose assigned it. They have a circular motion: this described no orbit. They are permanently fixed: this, having conducted the Magi to the Saviour's feet, disappeared for ever. Comets were always held by the ancients as prognostications of extraordinary events, good or bad. They have made emperors tremble on their thrones, and have nerved the arm of soldiers for the battle. But this was a luminous appearance, resembling in shape, figure, and splendour, a heavenly body, so completely, as to justify the appellation of *a star*—yet was it so expressly formed for the purpose of conducting them to the Redeemer, that they called it, unequivocally, "*his star*."

3. OF WHAT COUNTRY WERE THEY? I should translate the passage, "We, of the East, have seen his star"—in which case, the term *East* will not be used to specify the part of the heavens in which the star appeared, but the country from which they came.\* Perhaps from Mesopotamia, the country of Balaam, whose singular prophecy was probably handed down to them by tradition—"There shall come a star out of Jacob:" and there might appear to them a singular coincidence between the prediction and the phenomenon which they witnessed. Their gifts were Arabian—"gold, frankincense, and myrrh." Their title, Magi, is Persian: and they, of all nations, were likely to be best acquainted with the Messiah, through the prophecies of Daniel. If they came from Arabia Felix, or Sebæa, all of which are east of Jerusalem, and were men of rank, then was the prophecy of David fulfilled: "The kings of Sheba and of Seba shall bring gifts."

4. BY WHAT EVIDENCE IS THIS FACT SUPPORTED? Chalcidius writes of "the rising of a certain star, not denouncing death and diseases, but the descent of a mild and compassionate God to human converse."†

Thus were the prophecies of the East re-echoed by the western world. The whole globe slumbered in undisturbed tranquillity. The Jews, although tributary to Rome, took their harps from the willows, to sing the approach of Messiah the prince. Samaria had caught the contagion, and was looking for the Christ, who should "teach us all things." The weeks predicted by Daniel were accomplished; and the universal expectation may be conjectured, when impostors availed themselves of the state of the people's mind

\* See note 2, at the end of this Lecture.

† See note 3, at the end of this Lecture.



to personate the Messiah,\* and when strangers journeyed from the East to Jerusalem in quest of him.

The Magi came to the court of Herod, expecting *there* to have found the babe who was to be the king of the Jews. Their inquiry alarmed the jealousy of this monarch: and in consequence of it, when he learned that Christ was to be born in Bethlehem, “he sent and slew all the children in Bethlehem, and in the coasts thereof, from two years old and under.” This, alas, was public enough! The “voice of lamentation in Rama, when Rachel wept for her children because they were not,” surely was loud, and the history of the evangelists would have been blasted for ever in the eyes of their contemporaries, had they attempted imposition in so public an event. But Josephus does not record this slaughter. We answer, that Josephus, who wrote about seventy years after this event, drew all his history from the public records; and we may imagine that an act so cruel, and so inglorious to the memory of Herod, would hardly be transmitted to posterity through the medium of a public record. But Josephus *does* record many instances of the cruelty of Herod: is it, therefore, an objection to Matthew, that he records *one more*? Josephus relates those things which appertain immediately to state affairs: Matthew, those only connected with Jesus Christ. The history is not at all improbable, from the general character of Herod, who was one of the most sanguinary tyrants that ever disgraced humanity. It is probable, that he who slew Hyrcanus, his wife’s grandfather, at the age of eighty, and who, on a former occasion, had saved *his* life: who publicly executed his lovely and virtuous partner;† and who privately slaughtered three of his own children; and all these on principles of jealousy, should, on the same principles, be sparing of the blood of the children of others? In his last illness, a little before he died, he convened all the chief men of Judea, and after having shut them up in the Circus, he called his family together, and said—“I know that the Jews will rejoice at my death. You have these men in your custody. So soon as I am dead, and before it can be known publicly, let in the soldiers upon them, and *kill them*. All Judea, and every family, will then, although unwillingly, mourn at my death!”‡ “Nay,”—adds Josephus—“with tears in his eyes, he conjured them by their love to him, and by their fidelity to God, not to fail to obey his orders!”—We ask, whether, upon a consideration of this monster’s disposition, such a deed as that ascribed to him by Matthew is improbable?—Macrobius, a heathen author, who flourished at the close of

\* Acts v. 36, 37. † Mariamne. ‡ See note 4, at the end of this Lecture.

the fourth century, asserts it as a fact well known and indisputable.

That our Saviour had been in Egypt, is so far from being denied, that it is asserted by Celsus, who affirms that there he learned the arts of magic, to which he imputes his miracles.

The testimony of Josephus to the LIFE of Christ is as follows.

“At this time there was one Jesus, a wise man, if I may call him a man: for he did most wonderful works, and was a teacher of those who received the truth with delight. He won many to his persuasion, both of the Jews, and of the Gentiles. This was CHRIST; and although he was, at the instigation of some of our nation, and by Pilate’s sentence, suspended on the cross, yet those who loved him at the first, did not cease so to do: for he came to life again the third day, according to the holy prophets, by whom these, and a thousand other wonderful things respecting him, were spoken. And to this day, there remains a sect of men, who from him have the name of Christians.”\* We claim this, as the testimony of a learned, yet bigoted Jew! In this short passage is a corroboration of all the prominent declarations of the gospel respecting the Saviour—his teaching—his death—at the instigation of the Jews—by the judgment of Pilate—on the cross—his resurrection—on the third day—his appearance to his followers—and their unshaken attachment to him.

We are told by Matthew, that the fame of our Saviour during his life was reverberated throughout all Syria; and that there followed him great multitudes from Galilee, Judea, Decapolis, Idumæa, from beyond Jordan, and from Tyre and Sidon. Had the records of these countries remained, or were the works of their historians extant, we might expect a large confirmation of the gospel history. However, the evidence which we shall produce to our Saviour’s life and ministry must be admitted on all hands, because we shall take the testimony of three enemies. JULIAN, commonly called the apostate, acknowledges that Jesus and his disciples performed many wonderful works; and he, therefore, calls the Saviour an eminent magician. PORPHYRY allows that evil spirits were subject to him: for he says, that “after Jesus was worshipped, Esculapius and the other gods did no more converse with men.” CELSUS, unable to dispute the miracles of Jesus Christ, also flies to that childish plea, the imputation of them to magic. The Jews themselves, likewise, when they could not controvert the gospel history, nor deny these facts, ascribed them to Beelzebub.

\* See note 5, at the end of this Lecture.

We have the same evidence relative to the DEATH OF JESUS. We can produce the universal testimony of ancient writers, that at the time of our Lord's life and sufferings, the rulers mentioned in the evangelists by their name, actually *were* the governors of the day. One authentic heathen record, which is now lost, but the remembrance of which is perfectly preserved, and the existence of which can be clearly proved, was the account written by the governor of Judea, under whom our Lord was judged, condemned, and crucified. It was customary at Rome, as indeed it is in every empire to the present hour, for the prefects and rulers of distant provinces, to transmit to their sovereign, a summary relation of all the extraordinary events in their administration. That Pontius Pilate should send such an account to Rome, cannot be doubted: that he really *did*, is evident from the following testimony. JUSTIN MARTYR, who lived about a century after our Saviour's death, and who suffered martyrdom in Rome, was engaged in a controversy with the philosophers at large, and particularly with Crescens the cynic. In this controversy he challenged Crescens to dispute the cause of Christianity with him before the Roman senate. It is not to be believed that Crescens would have declined the contest, or have lost the opportunity of exposing his adversary before so august a body, if he could have triumphed over him in the detection of any palpable forgeries in the writings of the evangelists, relative to either the life or the death of our Lord. This father, in his Apology, speaking of the death and sufferings of the Saviour, refers the emperor, for the truth of his assertions, to the acts of Pontius Pilate. TERTULLIAN, who wrote his Apology about fifty years after Justin, says, that the emperor Tiberius, having received an account out of Palestine in Syria of the DIVINE PERSON who appeared in that country, paid him a particular regard, and threatened to punish any who should accuse the Christians: nay, that the emperor would have admitted him among the number of the deities whom he worshipped, had not the senate refused their consent. Tertullian was one of the most learned men of his age, and well skilled in the laws of the Roman empire.\* The acts of Pilate now extant, are spurious: for those to which we refer as authentic, had perished before the days of Eusebius, although they are mentioned by him.

The death of our Lord, and the manner of it, under Pontius Pilate, and in the reign of Tiberius, are mentioned both by Tacitus and by Lucian.

\* See Addison's Evidences of the Christian Religion; also note 6, at the end of this Lecture.



The last melancholy scenes of the Saviour's sufferings are also fully attested. The gospel history exactly coincides with the Jewish, and with the Roman customs; and the circumstances attending his dying agonies are universally admitted. Behold the Lord of life and glory hanging upon a cross! *There* could be no deception. He really suffered, he really died. The blood which stained his body, and moistened the ground, was his own heart's blood; and the tears which fell from his eyes, were the bitter tears of real and unspeakable sorrow. "The Sun beheld it—no, the shocking scene drove back his chariot! Nature sympathized with the expiring Redeemer, and heaven withdrew its light. Jesus suffered on the day in which the passover is eaten. This feast is kept on the fourteenth day of the month; and according to the Jewish mode of reckoning from the first appearance of the moon after her change, it fell on the very day in which she was at the *full*. An eclipse of the sun can only take place when the moon is between *it* and the earth; or, in other words, at what we call a *new* moon: but at the *full*, the moon is in the side of the heavens opposite to the sun, and *we* are between the two bodies: there could be, therefore, no natural eclipse of the sun at the time of the crucifixion. Another evidence, that it was a supernatural eclipse, level to every understanding, is, that in common eclipses the sun's total darkness *can* continue but twelve or fifteen minutes at most, but this awful darkness lasted no less than *three hours*! How far the darkness extended cannot now be easily decided: the following evidence, we think, proves that it was very general:—Phlegon, the famous astronomer under the emperor Trajan, said, that "in the fourth year of the 202 Olympiad," which was that of the death of Christ, "there was such a total eclipse of the sun at noon-day, that the stars were plainly visible."\*—Suidas also says, that Dionysius the Areopagite, who was then at Heliopolis in Egypt, upon this surprising phenomenon, exclaimed, "Either the Author of Nature is suffering, or he sympathizes with some one who does—or the frame of the world is dissolving!" Josephus bears witness to the rending the veil of the temple; and to this day, in the church of the Sepulchre, which stands on Mount Calvary, is to be seen a cleft in the rock, said to be occasioned by the earthquake: which cannot certainly be proved—but it is evident, that the chasm is natural, and not the effect of art; and that the rock was rent by some violent commotion of the earth.

After the decease of our Lord, Joseph of Arimathea went to Pi-

\* See note 7, at the end of this Lecture.

late, and petitioned for the body, which was granted to him. This rich man deposited it in his own "new tomb, in which never man was laid." Of course, should a resurrection take place, it must be *that* of Jesus; it could be of no other person. The chief priests, alarmed possibly at the awful convulsions which accompanied his death, requested and obtained permission of Pilate to set a watch over the tomb. They shrouded their own fears under a pretended concern lest the people should be deceived. We have accompanied the Saviour to the tomb, we have seen it sealed, we have left a Roman guard at the mouth of the sepulchre; and let the chief priests produce the body on, or after, the third day in order to silence the clamours of the deluded multitude. This, however, is not done. The plenitude of their malice was not equal to the war which they attempted to wage against the high decrees of Heaven.

The evangelists assert that on the third day Jesus arose: and they tell a regular, plain, unvarnished tale. Let us now examine the principles on which the resurrection of Jesus is opposed.

The body was not in the sepulchre on the third day. Let the guards give an account of the loss of it—they and they alone are answerable for it. Only one account was ever attempted to be palmed upon the world—"His disciples came, and stole him while we slept." Now observe,

1. The guards appointed over the sepulchre were Roman guards, since it will appear by the sequel of this history that they were subject to Pilate, and under his control; which would not have been the case had they been Jews, but they would have been answerable to the rulers of that nation. Now, it was death for a Roman soldier to sleep upon his watch: therefore, had they been really overpowered with slumber, they would rather have feigned a miracle, when the minds of their employers were so well prepared to receive it, to save themselves from the punishment legally due to their crime, than have openly avowed it, had not higher powers said, "We will secure you." We have more instances than one upon record of jailers suffering death for the loss of their prisoners.

2. If the guards were really asleep, how came they to be so positive as to the persons who stole the body? On what principle could they affirm that the disciples were the depredators? I suppose that this is the first and the last instance in which men ever attempted to give evidence on a transaction which took place when they were confessedly asleep, or were ever called upon for such a purpose.

3. Why were not the disciples immediately apprehended and made to restore the body? It was indisputably the duty of the

chief priests to produce it after the third day publicly in a state of death, and thus for ever to silence the pretensions of a deceiver. Did the enemies of Jesus lack either power or influence, to rescue a dead body from twelve unarmed, poor, defenceless men, had they seriously entertained even a suspicion that his disciples had stolen him? Did not the matter die away so soon as possible? Was there even any inquiry made into the affair! Did not the disciples boldly, and openly, preach the resurrection of Jesus, in defiance of the threatenings of the Jews?

4. Is it probable that the timid, unbelieving disciples of Jesus Christ should have the rashness to attack a band of Roman soldiers; or to venture into the sepulchre, even had they slumbered? We feel that we have reason to complain of the want of candour in infidelity in urging its objections against Christianity. Fair and open ground is relinquished for finesse and quibbling. The disciples are sometimes portrayed mean and timid men, to expose them to contempt: but when it serves the purpose of skepticism, they are represented, wise, prudent, designing, courageous, enterprising; and more is ascribed to them than human power ever yet performed. Now they cannot have two opposite characters; and we hold infidelity to the gospel history, and to its own concessions, that they were plain, uninformed, timid, unbelieving men. Were these characters to attack a legion of Roman soldiers successfully?

5. Could the immense stone have been rolled away, and the body removed, without noise and confusion sufficient to break their slumbers? Surely they must have been dead, and not asleep!

6. Would the disciples, had they stolen the body, have remained to lay the linen clothes in order—as they were found? Is it probable that amid the confusion which such a circumstance supposes, that they would either have had leisure, or inclination, or even presence of mind, for such an arrangement?

7. Have we not proved that heathen writers, and even enemies, admitted the fact of our Saviour's miracles, although they ascribed them to a false cause? Are there not in the gospels four successive instances of his raising the dead, uncontroverted? And is his own resurrection more wonderful than these? or than that of the sleeping saints at his death? Upon the whole, then, the resurrection of Jesus never was opposed at that time by an objection that demanded a moment's serious consideration: while the evidences in favour of it, are numerous, respectable, and decisive. "For I delivered unto you first of all, that which I also received: how that Christ died for our sins, according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day, according to the scrip-



tures: and that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve. After that he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once: of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all, he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time." These witnesses were numerous and respectable; and they afterwards proved their sincerity by laying down their lives for their testimony.

Forty days he showed himself alive, by "many infallible proofs," at the expiration of which he ascended to glory. The disciples were eye-witnesses of this also. Their sincerity they showed in their sufferings, and it was not a point in which they could be deceived. In things which fall under the eye, the clown is as good a witness as the philosopher; and in plain matter of fact, the illiterate are as capable of judging as the learned. The consequences of his ASCENSION were seen in the pouring out of the Holy Spirit upon them, in a public manner, on a public occasion: and the power then conferred of working miracles, was a standing evidence of the truth of what they preached for nearly a century. This event sufficiently accounts for the subsequent wisdom and courage of the naturally illiterate and timid disciples. Such are the evidences by which the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ are supported, as matters of fact: whether they be decisive and satisfactory, you must determine.

That the immediate disciples of Jesus Christ did meet together for the purposes assigned in the sacred scriptures, may be proved from the testimony of Pliny the younger: who says that "Christ was worshipped as a God among the Christians: that they would rather suffer death than blaspheme him: that they received a sacrament, and by it entered into a vow of abstaining from sin and wickedness, conforming to the advice of Paul; that they had private assemblies of worship, and used to sing together in hymns."\* This account was written about seventy years after our Saviour's crucifixion.

Quadratus, who was converted to Christianity, was a celebrated Athenian philosopher; and he says, that "those whom our Saviour raised and healed, were not only seen while *he himself* was upon earth, but survived after his departure out of the world. Nay," adds he, "some of them were living in our days." And both Tertullian and Arnobius assert, the conversion of multitudes of learned men, from the simple conviction of the truth of Chris-

\* See Addison's Evidences. See also note 8, at the end of this Lecture.

tianity, arising from evidences then within their reach, and from personal knowledge.\*

We conceive that by this time, you will be ready to admit the truth of the apostle's assertion, which we read to you at the opening of this Lecture: "We have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty."

And now it is only necessary to observe, that Revelation is to us, what the star was to the wise men.

1. **IN ITS NATURE.** It is "a light shining in a dark place." It is the "day-spring from on high visiting us." What a world was this before it arose! The shadows of ten thousand midnights could not have made a gloom so horrible; and the blackness that veiled Egypt three long days and nights, was light in comparison of this irksome impenetrable obscurity. The trembling feeble ray of reason, served only to make darkness visible; and the proud discoveries of philosophy shone only through the night as the twinkling of a taper, to expire when the sun arose. No cheering beam illumined either hemisphere, till this morning star was seen in the East, as the harbinger of perfect day. Then the shout was heard—"The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; upon them that dwell in the land of the shadow of death hath the light shined." It resembled the star,

2. **IN ITS SOURCE.** It is remarkable that all intelligence came first from the East.—Science there uncovered all the effulgence of her radiant head, while the West was in darkness. There was the first manifestation of God; and long, very long, was this light confined to her borders. A night of superstition and of ignorance brooded on the world, while the descendants of Abraham (who was himself from the East) enjoyed the light of truth. In every respect the lands lying under the rising sun have ever had the start of us; and we have been satisfied to be their disciples. Our language, cold and torpid in itself, has borrowed imagery from theirs. We have learned from them in our eloquence, to thunder with the storm: to rush with the torrent: to glide with the river: to murmur with the rill; and to whisper with the breeze. From them came this volume fraught with intelligence; and revelation, like the guiding star, arose in the East.

3. **IN ITS OBJECT** it resembles this star. Jesus Christ is the sum and substance of this book. Obliterate his name from these sacred pages, and you have extinguished their light, destroyed their vigour,

\* Aristides and others.

deranged their harmony, and defaced their beauty. There is not a particle of information treasured up here, that does not, more nearly or remotely, in some way, relate to him. Not a prophecy, not a history, not a miracle, not a doctrine, not a precept, not an epistle, that is not united, by some invisible thread, to the Messiah. The express design of this record is to make us acquainted with him: to discover what he has done: to enforce what he has said: to declare what he expects: to testify of "the King of the Jews."

4. IN ITS ISSUE; Revelation resembles this star. It had no sooner led these sages to the feet of Jesus Christ, than it disappeared for ever. The Bible safely conducts us to Christ, but not immediately. It, therefore, remains to guide our erring feet through this world, as the passage to his more immediate presence. It is necessary to discover the thousand dangers of the way, and the difficulties which we must surmount. But when we shall have arrived at our Father's house: when we shall see him, eye to eye, and face to face; when we are safely conducted to the place where he is: having fulfilled its commission, and answered its destination, *this* star also shall disappear.

O may we see him as our Prince and Lord! see him—not as did Balaam when he reluctantly predicted his coming, and said, "I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh!"—See him—not as did the Jews, who discerned no form nor comeliness in him; who saw no beauty that they should desire him; and who refused their king! See him—not as Herod, who desired to subvert his cause, and to take away his life—not with an envious, malignant eye: but see him—as did these sages, who fell down at his feet and worshipped him:—embrace him—as did Simeon, when he was about to die; and behold him—where he unveils all the splendours of his face, and fills the temple of God with light, life, and his unclouded presence!

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## NOTES.

NOTE 1.—The expectation of the world, relative to the appearance of some distinguished character, about the time of our Lord's advent, was elucidated by an extract from Virgil's *Pollio*, in page 255, of the preceding Lecture: and the original of the lines translated there is subjoined:

*SICELIDES* Musæ, paullo majora canamus!

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*Ultima* Cumæi venit jam carminis ætas;  
*Magnas* ab integro sæclorum nascitur ordo.

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*Jam* nova progenies cœlo demittitur alto.



Tu modo nascenti puero, quo ferrea primum  
Desinet, ac toto surget gens aurea mundo,  
Casta fave Lucina.  
Teque adeo decus hoc ævi, te Consule, inibit,  
Pollio; et incipient magni procedere menses.  
Te duce, si qua manent, sceleris vestigia nostri  
Inrita perpetuâ solvent formidine terras:

Pacatumque reget patriis virtutibus orbem.  
At tibi prima, puer, nullo manuscula cultu,  
Errantis ederas passim cum baccare, tellus,  
Mixtaque ridenti colocasia fundet acantho.

—nec magnos metuent armenta leones.

Occidet et serpens, et fallax herba veneni  
Occidet.

Molli paullatim flavescent campus aristâ,  
Incultisque rubens pendebit sentibus uva;  
Et duræ quercus sudabunt roscida mella.  
Pauca tamen suberunt priscæ vestigia fraudis,  
Quæ tentare Thetim ratibus, quæ cingere muris  
Oppida, quæ jubeant tellurem infindere sulcis,  
Alter erit tum Tiphys, et altera quæ vehat Argo  
Delectos heroas; erunt etiam altera bella;  
Atque iterum ad Trojam magnus mittetur Achilles.  
Hinc, ubi jam firmata virum te fecerit ætas,  
Cedet et ipse mari vector; nec nautica pinus  
Mutabit merces: omnis feret omnia tellus:  
Non rastros patietur humus, non vinea falcem.

Talia sæcla, suis dixerunt, currite, fuis  
Concordes stabili fatorum numine Parcæ.

Adgredere o magnos, aderit jam tempus, honores,  
Cara deûm suboles, magnum Jovis incrementum!  
Adspice convexo nutantem pondere mundum;  
Terrasque, tractusque maris, cœlumque profundum:  
Adspice, venturo lætantur ut omnia sæclo.  
O mihi tum longæ maneat pars ultima vitæ,  
Spiritus et, quantum sat erit tua dicere facta!

*Virg. Ecl. iv. Pollio.*

NOTE 2.—I have translated *εἶδομεν γὰρ αὐτὸς τὸν ἀστὲρα ἐν τῇ ἀνατολῇ*—in page 260, of the preceding Lecture—*We, of the East, have seen his star*—referring the term *East*, not to the part of the heavens in which the star appeared, but to the country whence they came. I believe that I am not alone in this translation; and, if I mistake not, this, or a very similar one, is the rendering of Dr. Campbell, in his new translations of the gospels. Another explanation is offered by Poole, in his learned and laborious Synopsis; which is, *We have seen his star at its rising*; and, he adds, that the Greek astronomers use the term *ἀνατολή* to imply the rising of any heavenly body, and *δύσις* for its setting. Thus, the passage may mean—‘We saw this star from its very first appearance, at the moment when it began to shine in the heavens; and its position appeared to us to mark its relation to Judea.’ And this learned writer, moreover, informs us, that the professors of astrology (and such, perhaps, were these Magi) were accustomed to assign certain spaces of the heavens, in their calculations, to certain correspondent regions of the earth.—*Ad exortum ejus, sive, quum oriretur*: Huc facit, 1. quòd Græcis astronomis *ortus stellarum ἀνατολή*, et, *ἐπιτολή* (ut *ἀνατολή ἡλίου*, *ortus solis*, Apoc. 7. 2.) et *occasus earum, δύσις*: 2. quòd *oriens*, sicut

et occidens, plur. num. ἀνατολαὶ et δυσμαί, plerumque exprimuntur, Matt. 8, 11, et 24, 27. Luc. 13, 29. Credibile est, apparuisse hanc stellam in ea cæli parte, quæ consensu astrologorum ad Judæam pertinuit, ut solent ab ejus artis professoribus terrarum regiones certis cæli spatiis ascribi: Quæ dico, non quòd superstitionis ariolationibus patrocinari cupiam, sed quòd arbitrer Deum ità res disponere, ut ea, quæ, sive jure, sive injuriâ, magni apud homines fiunt, interdum trahat in vera testimonium.”

*Pol. Synop. Crit. Tom. IV. in Matt. cap. ii. 2.*

NOTE 3.—The testimony of Chalcidius, relative to the appearance of this luminous body: translated in page 260, of the preceding Lecture. The passage is thus extracted and quoted by the author whose remarks form the substance of the former note.

Testimonium CHALCIDII PLATONICI (modò γνησιον sit) appositum est, “*Sanè notanda est*,” inquit, “*alia sanctorum et venerabiliorum historia quæ perhibet de ortu stellæ cujusdam, non morbos mortisque denunciante, sed descensum Dei venerabilis ad humanæ conversationis, rerumque mortalium, gratiam; quam stellam cum nocturno itinere suscepissent Chaldaeorum, profectò sapientes, viri, et consideratione rerum cælestium satùs exercitati, quasissse dicuntur recentis Dei ortum, repertaque illà Majestate pueri, venerati esse, et vota Deo tanto convenientia nuncupasse.*”

*Poli Synopsis Crit. Tom. IV. in Matt. cap. ii. 2.\**

NOTE 4.—Testimony of Josephus, to the cruel disposition of Herod manifested especially in his last moments; noticed and translated in page 261, of the preceding Lecture.

Προσκαλεσάμενος δὲ Σαλάμην τὴν ἀδελφὴν καὶ τὸν ἄνδρα ταύτης Ἀλεξάν, “*ἰδα,*” ἔφη, “*Ἰσδαίς τὸν μὲν ἐμὸν ἐορτάσοντος θάνατον, δύναμαι δὲ πενθεῖσθαι δι’ ἐτέρων, καὶ λαμπρὸν ἐπιτάφιον σχεῖν, ἂν ὑμεῖς θελήσητε ταῖς ἐμαῖς ἐντολαῖς ὑπαρῆναι. τὴς δὲ τῆς φερεμένης ἄνδρας, ἐπεὶ δὲ ἐκπνεύσω, τάχις τὰ κτεῖναιτε περισήσαντες τῆς σφαγιάτας, ἵνα πᾶσα Ἰσδαία, καὶ πᾶς οἶκος, ἄκων ἐπ’ ἐμοὶ δακρύσῃ.*”

*Jos. de Bello Jud. Tom. II. lib. i. cap. xxxiii. page 1041. Hudsoni edit.*

In his Antiquities of the Jews, he relates the same fact, with this addition:

Καὶ ὁ μὲν μετὰ δακρύων ποτνιάμενος, καὶ τῶν συγγενῶν τὴν εὐνοίαν καὶ πίστιν τῶν Θείων προσκαλὼν ἐπέσκηψε μὴ τιμωσθαι ἄξιον. ἀρκύνειν ὁμολόγησεν οὐ παραβῆσθαι.

*Jos. de Antiq. Jud. Tom. II. lib. xvii. cap. vii. p. 769. Hudsoni edit.*

Josephus might well add, that he was a man “totally alienated from humanity”—and express his surprise that his thirst of blood should remain in those last moments, when most men are disposed to bury even the injuries which they have received in eternal oblivion! His family had the humanity to break their vow to him; and immediately upon his death set their illustrious prisoners at liberty.

NOTE 5.—Testimony of Josephus to the life, the sufferings, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ: as also of the unshaken attachment of his followers to him.

Γίνεται δὲ κατὰ τῶτον τὸν χρόνον Ἰησοῦς, σοφὸς ἄνθρωπος, ἔτι καὶ ἄνδρα αὐτὸν λέγειν κρη. ἢ γὰρ παραδόξων ἔργων ποιητῆς, διδάτκαλος ἀνθρώπων τῶν ἡδοῇ τάλανθῃ

\* I had quoted, upon the same authority, an extract from Pliny, relative to the appearance of a comet: but, upon a reference to the historian himself, I discovered that his remark related to “comets in general, and had no reference to any particular event.” The criticism of the Monthly Review led to this examination; and I am convinced they are right. I wish the work had been reviewed by these critics, before the second edition had been so far advanced as to allow me little opportunity to avail myself of their liberal remarks upon my volume. It is not the first time I have been deceived by authority which appeared to me unquestionable: but at the moment of sending out the first edition, I had not a Pliny at hand; and thought I might rely upon such a writer as Poole: I have been deceived; and in this, as in every instance, am ready to retract when I am convinced of any mistake.

διχομένον· καὶ πολλὰς μὲν ἰσθμίας, πολλὰς δὲ καὶ τὰς ἑλληνικὰς ἐπηγάγετο. ὁ Χριστὸς οὗτος ην. καὶ αὐτὸν ἐνδείξει τῶν πρώτων ἀνδρῶν παρ' ἡμῖν, σλαυρῶ ἐπι-  
 λετιμηκότος Πιλάτου, οὐκ ἐπαύσαντο οἷγε πρώτων αὐτὸν ἀγαπησαντες. ἐφάνη γὰρ  
 αὐτοῖς τρίτην ἔχον ἡμέραν πάλιν ζῶν, τῶν θείων προφητῶν ταῦτά τε καὶ ἄλλα  
 μυρία θαυμάσια περὶ αὐτῶν εἰρηκότων. εἰς ἔτι νῦν τῶν Χριστιανῶν ἀπὸ τῆς ἀνο-  
 μασμῆν οὐκ ἐπέλιπε τὸ φῶλον.

*Jos. de Antiq. Jud. Tom. II. lib. xviii. cap. iv. p. 798. Hudsoni edit.*

Some have affirmed that this passage is interpolated: and it is always easy to make affirmations, and to raise objections. The following reasons have always satisfied my mind that it is genuine. 1. It accords well with its connexion, and forms a link with the other parts of the narrative. 2. It agrees in point of time with the facts narrated along with it. 3. It is such a testimony as might be expected from such a man as Josephus: neither enlarged upon with the partiality of friendship, (for he was a Jew, and not a Christian,) nor disfigured to blot the fidelity of the historian: but related with a conciseness which shows him unwilling to keep back any part of the fact, yet unable to account for the extraordinary circumstances attending it. 4. It would have been a marvellous thing indeed, if Josephus, who died within 93 years after Christ, and who professed to write every thing worthy recording relative to the Jewish nation, both in its former state, and in the degradation to which it had sunk in his days, should have omitted to speak of an event, nearly contemporary with himself, which was in every one's mouth, which excited such a ferment in his own nation; and while a new sect, springing from this very event, attracted the notice and the persecution of both Jews and Gentiles, and boldly, perseveringly, successfully, disseminated their tenets around him. 5. Origen, who flourished about 200 years after Christ, appeals to this testimony, when he says 'Ἐν γὰρ τῷ ἰστορικῷ καὶ δεκάτῳ τῆς Ἰσθμίας ἀρχαιολογίας ὁ Ἰώσηπος, &c. ὁ δ' αὐτὸς, καὶ τοιοῦτο ἀπίστῳ τῷ Ἰησοῦ ὡς Χριστῷ, &c.\*

*Orig. contra Cels. lib. I. p. 35. Cantab. edit. 1677.*

The substance of these extracts is given in page 262, of the preceding Lecture.

**NOTE 6.**—Testimonies of Justin Martyr, and of Tertullian, to the facts of the life, the death, and the resurrection of Christ.

**JUSTIN MARTYR**, speaking of the parting of our Lord's vesture, &c., appeals to the acts of Pilate then extant. Δὲ ταῦτα ὅτι γέγονε, δύνασθε μαθεῖν ἐκ τῶν ἐπὶ Πιλάτῳ Πιλάτῳ γενομένων ἁγίων.

*Just. Martyr. Apol. prima, p. 56, Thirlbii edit. 1722.*

This Apology was addressed to the emperor Antoninus Pius.

Again, he challenges Crescens to a public contest on the merits of Christianity before the Roman senate. Καὶ ὅτι ἀληθὴ λέγω, εἰ μὴ ἀννέχθησαν ὑμῖν αἱ κοινωναίαι τῶν λόγων, ἔτοιμος καὶ ἐφ' ὑμῶν κοινωνεῖν τῶν ἐρωτησῶν πάλιν· βασιλικὸν δ' ἂν καὶ τὸ ἐργον εἴη.

*Just. Martyr. Apol. secunda, p. 122, Thirlbii edit. 1722.*

This apology was addressed to the Roman senate. Epiphanius also speaks of

\* The Monthly Reviewers remark upon this controverted passage, "We think the Lecturer has been indiscreet in pressing into his service the supposed testimony of Josephus to the divine mission and character of Christ, because on the very face of it we recognise the marks of a most clumsy forgery. It proves too much; since the historian, after having given such evidence, must have professed himself a Christian. Lardner's reasons for rejecting the paragraph are sufficient: viz. 'that it is not quoted, nor referred to, by any Christian writers before Eusebius; that it is wanting in the copies of Josephus which were seen by Photius in the ninth century; that it is unsuitable to the character of Josephus, and interrupts the course of the narration.' These arguments are stronger than those which are adduced by Dr. C. in order to satisfy the reader that this is a genuine part of Josephus's text." Of this the reader will himself judge. Had it appeared to me, a matter as clearly decided, as it seemed to the Reviewer, I should not have retained the passage in this second edition. I am not the less obliged to the critic for his opinion, because I do not think exactly with him on this subject. So far as Hudson's notes convey his sentiments on this passage, I think his criticisms are in favour of its authenticity.



the acts of Pilate, and is quoted by the learned and accurate Grotius. See Grot. de Ver. Rel. Christ. lib. ii. sect. ii. in not. 5.

TERTULLIAN thus speaks of the opinion which Tiberius had formed of Christ, and of Christianity, from the authentic records which he had received from Palestine, respecting him:

Tiberius ergo, cujus tempore nomen Christianum in seculum intravit, annuntiata sibi ex Syria Palæstina quæ illic veritatem istius divinitatis revelarant delulit ad senatum cum prærogativa suffragii sui. Senatus, quia non ipse probaverat, respuit: Cæsar in sententia mansit, comminatus periculum accusatoribus Christianorum.—Consulite commentarios vestros!

*Tertull. Apologet. p. 6. Lutet. edit. 1634.*

He explains why the will of the emperor alone could not prevail to enrol Christ among the number of the gods, to which he was so decidedly inclined—Vetus erat decretum, ne qui deus ab imperatore consecraretur, nisi a senatu probatus. *There was an ancient decree, that no god should be consecrated by the emperor, unless approved by the senate.* Tertullian would not have dared, at that time, to have affirmed these things, had they not been true: much less would he have thrown out the challenge, "*Consult your records!*"

The substance of these extracts is given in page 263, of the preceding Lecture.

NOTE 7.—ORIGEN mentions Phlegon's testimony to the darkness at our Lord's crucifixion, as also to the earthquake. *Περὶ δὲ τῆς ἐπὶ Τιβερίῳ Καίσαρος ἐκλείψεως, οὐ βασιλεύοντος καὶ ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἴκεν ἐσθλαρωσθαι, καὶ περὶ τῶν μεγάλων τότε γενομένων σεισμῶν τῆς γῆς, ἀνέγραψε καὶ Φλέγων ἐν τῷ τρασκαίδεκάτῳ ὀμῖαν τῶν Χρονικῶν.*

*Orig. contra Cels. p. 80, Cantab. edit. 1677.*

The evidence produced in this note, is stated in page 264, of the preceding Lecture.

NOTE 8.—To what has been translated from PLINY in page 267, of the preceding Lecture, may be added his testimony of the rapid spread of Christianity. Multi omnis ætatis, omnis ordinis, utriusque sexus etiam vocantur in periculum. Neque civitates tantum, sed vicos etiam, atque agros, superstitionis istius contagio pervagata est—prope jam desolata templa—et sacra solennia diu intermissa: Victimæ, quarum adhuc rarissimus emptor inveniebatur.

*Many of every age, of every rank, and of both sexes, were brought into danger. The contagion of this superstition had spread, not into cities merely, but also into villages, and into fields. The temples were nearly desolate. The most sacred rites for some time were suspended. And scarcely any one was found to purchase victims for them.*

*Plin. Epist. lib. x. epist. 97.*

## LECTURE XIII.

## THE CHARACTER OF THE WRITERS OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS.

## 1 JOHN I. 1—3.

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life; (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

## HEB. XI. 36—38.

And others had trial of cruel mockings, and scourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheep-skins, and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented: (of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens, and in caves of the earth.

WHAT a sensation must the ascension of the Saviour have excited in heaven and upon earth! what interest in the bosoms of some, what emotions of fear and of rage in the hearts of others! what were the reflections of all parties upon this wonderful and impressive event? Had the chief priests *then* seen him, (and it is not impossible that from the tops of their houses at Jerusalem they *might* see him) they would have gnashed their teeth with envy and indignation, and disappointment, and have said—‘Is this the despised carpenter’s son, whom we crucified? Is this the man whom we endeavoured to confine in the grave? Is this the cause which we hoped to subvert? Is this the teacher whom we laboured to destroy? O fruitless efforts! He rises superior to all our designs! He triumphs over all our malice!’ But what did the disciples think? Were they not saying in their hearts, ‘Is this the friend upon whose kind and disinterested counsels we have so long relied? Is

this the expiring "Author and Finisher of our faith," whom our unbelieving fears thought to be "dead, but who is alive again, and will live for evermore?" John would ask, 'Is this the Saviour who permitted me to share his confidence, and to repose my head upon his bosom?' Thomas would inquire, 'Can this be the man, of whom my faithless heart said, "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my fingers into the print of the nails, and thrust my hands into his side, I will not believe?"' Prostrate and weeping on the mount, Peter would say, 'Is this the master whom I denied, and for whom I dared not endure a little affliction? Is this he who raised me from my vile employment, and admitted me into his glorious service, but whom I feared to own, what day my false tongue said, "I know not the man?" And am I, who was afraid to "watch with him one hour," and ashamed to be called his disciple, permitted to behold his glory, to participate his parting blessing, and to share the dignity of his exaltation?—"To me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given?"—Would they not *all* say—'From this moment we give our fears to the winds of heaven? "Lord, we believe, help thou our unbelief?" We wait the accomplishment of thy promise, and hail the dawn of thy empire!' And while these were gazing below, lost in wonder, in love, and in admiration, were not the angels answering each other in responsive lays? "He hath ascended up on high! he hath led captivity captive! he hath received gifts for men! yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God may dwell among them!" He ascended higher, and they renewed their song—"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace, good will toward men!" As he still continued to rise, and gradually to lose sight of the earth, "the chariots of God, which are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels," waited to receive him: the celestial harps were struck yet louder; and the full chorus shouted, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in! Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle! Lift up your heads, O ye gates, even lift them up, ye everlasting doors, and the king of glory shall come in! Who is this king of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory!" And now all the resplendent scene faded through distance from mortal vision. HIM, the heavens received; and he sat down on his Father's throne. Even then, did not a voice break from the most excellent glory, the voice of God, heard and adored by all the armies of heaven? "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; and let all the angels of God worship him. Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness



is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession!" Still were the disciples riveted to the spot whence he ascended; still were their eyes fixed on the point in the heavens where he disappeared: still his voice sounded in their ears, and they seemed to listen to his parting blessing. "And while they looked steadfastly towards heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus which is taken from you up into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." And they returned unto Jerusalem: but as they left the hallowed mount, surely their hearts burned within them, and they said—"Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things! And blessed be his glorious name for ever; and let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen, and amen."

But we must now turn away from this great sight, and follow these same men through the scenes of their subsequent lives. We must also examine the conduct of those who led the way under the former dispensation, and from whose writings the mission and the claims of Jesus were proved; and it is our business, this evening, to present you with an outline of THE CHARACTER OF THE WRITERS OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS. Listen to the discussion of a few simple propositions upon this subject. We assert—

I. THAT THE BOOKS OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS WERE REALLY WRITTEN BY THOSE WHOSE NAMES THEY BEAR.

We can attempt to prove this position only upon one common principle of reasoning, which will, however, be deemed conclusive. It is, the testimony of the people to whom these oracles were committed, and the concurrent consent of all nations. A large proportion of this volume consists of the public chronicles of a whole empire; and there is an end of the good faith of nations if they admit forgeries into their public records; the very sources from which the historian draws are contaminated. With respect to the laws of Moses, the books of the respective prophets, the history of the gospels, and the epistles of the New Testament, they are allowed by the very persons *among* whom, and *for* whom they were written, to be the productions of those very men whose names are prefixed to them. The testimony of any man respecting the historians or the poets of his own country, and especially the testimony of a whole body of people respecting their own writers, ought to be deemed decisive; because they, and they only, are competent wit-

nesses in the affair. Now, these men were Jews; and we have the testimony of the whole Jewish nation, handed down from father to son through all successive generations, from the periods when the different writers flourished to the present hour, that such and such books, were, according to their pretensions, really written by such and such persons, to whom they are ascribed; and all nations have concurred, at every point of time, in this testimony. These writers ever have been acknowledged by them; and the chronology of their works, for the most part, has been accurately determined. No man who pretends to reason can deny his assent to such evidence. He who can bring himself to reject such authority, may with equal propriety conclude that the productions of Homer or of Virgil, of Demosthenes or of Cicero, are not really the writings of the distinguished poets and orators whose names they bear. For these rest precisely upon the same evidence which we now produce in favour of the sacred records—the testimony of their contemporaries, and of their countrymen, and the concurrent consent of all nations. Deny this authority in the one case, and you must necessarily destroy it in the other: neither can you (to be consistent) believe with any degree of certainty, any thing but that which falls within the immediate sphere of your own knowledge. To follow this principle, what a fund of genius and of information must be destroyed! We must blot out the works of all our historians, on the pretence that they need decisive evidence; and human intelligence must be drawn from the scanty springs of threescore years and ten, furnished by a man's own life. But if the testimony of a people respecting their own writers, and the general consent of nations be any thing: if this be the authority upon which we receive all works, and all writers: if this be the basis of all our historical certainty: then, it is ceded to the writers of the Bible, and on this general principle must it be admitted, that the books of the Old and New Testaments were really written by those whose names they bear. We affirm,

## II. THAT THE WRITERS WERE, FOR THE MOST PART, EYE-WITNESSES OF THE FACTS WHICH THEY RECORDED.

There is a sufficient degree of internal evidence, deducible from the different compositions themselves, to establish this assertion. Examine the first five books of the scriptures, and it will appear, that Moses was necessarily an eye-witness of most of the events recorded in his law. He was present during all the plagues of Egypt, and was constituted the great agent in producing them. He saw the water transformed into blood—the pestilence which de-

stroyed the cattle—the insects which covered the country—the protracted night which brooded over the whole empire, Goshen excepted—and he heard the cry of despair sound from all quarters, re-echoed from the palace to the prison, when the first-born were slain. He was an eye-witness to the deliverance of the Israelites, and to their miraculous journey through the wilderness. He saw the fire which encircled Mount Sinai, and the cloud which rested upon its summit: he heard the terrible thunderings, and the more fearful voice of God. He beheld every fact which he relates till they reached the very borders of Canaan. When *he* died, Joshua took the command of Israel's armies, and recorded events as they transpired, till *he* also was laid in the dust of death. The books of Judges, of Ruth, of Samuel, of the Kings, and Chronicles, although the compositions of different persons were evidently, from their style, written at the time, and on the spot, where the events which they relate took place. This is manifest, from the simplicity of the narrations, and the appeal both to persons and to things *then* well known, the remembrance of which is *now* lost. Moreover, we are incessantly referred, in the historical parts of the scriptures, to books which are no longer extant, but which were *then* unquestionably esteemed faithful records; and this very circumstance proves at once the antiquity, the veracity, and the preservation of the Bible. Precisely on the same ground is the New Testament recommended to us. Listen to the language of the apostles themselves: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life—declare we unto you!" We maintain,

III. THAT THE THINGS WHICH THEY DID NOT SEE, THEY DERIVED FROM THE MOST CERTAIN EVIDENCES, AND DREW FROM THE PUREST SOURCES.

If a man be incompetent to record any thing but that which he sees, history is altogether useless. But a satisfactory degree of certainty is attainable on events of which we were not eye-witnesses; and no one in this assembly doubts the signing of Magna Charta, or the battle of Agincourt, any more than if he had stood by, and seen the one fought, and the seals affixed to the other. We owe much to the integrity of others; and the mutual confidence on which society is founded, requires with justice our assent to thousands of events, which transpired long before we were born, or which, if contemporary with ourselves, were transacted at some remote spot on the face of the globe. Who will affirm that Hume or Rapin,



were incompetent to produce a history, which, making some allowances for human prejudices, is worthy the confidence and credit of our countrymen? Yet neither the one nor the other was an eye-witness of more than an insignificant portion of his voluminous production. But if, by drawing from pure sources, a man is to be deemed competent to relate facts of which he was not an eye-witness: then, the writers of the Bible, in those particular events of which confessedly they were not eye-witnesses, but which they affirm with confidence, are entitled to our credit. Moses, for instance, on these principles, is competent to the relation of every event recorded in the book of Genesis; although it is admitted that they took place before his birth, and although he goes back to the beginning of all things. From Adam to Noah, from Noah to Abraham, from Abraham to Joseph, and from Joseph to Moses, but *four* persons are necessary to transmit events as they transpired; and these four persons were Methuselah, Shem, Isaac, and Amram, the grandfather of Moses. Those things of which the apostle Paul was not an eye-witness he most surely believed, because he lived with those who were the companions of our Lord through all his ministry, and were present during those very events which he received upon their testimony. There can be no question that he found them men of unshaken veracity. The disciple of Gamaliel was not likely to become the dupe of the designing. He must have had something like evidence to lead him to relinquish the fair prospect of worldly emolument for certain and inevitable suffering: he must have felt something like conviction, to destroy the prejudices which he openly avowed, and which were sufficiently powerful to make him sanction the murder of Stephen. In every instance in which the writers of the Old and New Testament were not eye-witnesses of the events which they recorded, it will be found, upon the closest scrutiny, that they derived their evidence from the most authentic sources. We shall prove,

#### IV. THAT THEY WERE MEN OF INTEGRITY, IMPARTIALITY, AND CANDOUR.

That they were men of INTEGRITY we gather from the tacit concessions of their most inveterate enemies. A thousand accusations were alleged against them, equally cruel, injurious, and unfounded. Every possible effort was made to terrify and to silence them; and scourgings, and imprisonments, and death itself, were added to menaces. They were charged with sedition, while their writings, their preaching, and their conduct, equally and powerfully enjoined,

that their followers should "submit to every ordinance of man, for the Lord's sake." They were unjustly accused of polluting the temple. It was said that they despised the law, the purity of which they exemplified in their lives. But their integrity was never questioned, and their statement of facts was never denied. That which they affirmed, they affirmed openly; they affirmed on the spot stained with the Saviour's blood, and on which the facts which they asserted were transacted: they affirmed before a whole people, who were capable of detecting imposition and exposing falsehood, if there had been either the one or the other, and whose determined enmity impelled them to seize every occasion against them: yet, amid all this, their integrity could not be disputed, and their veracity stood unimpeached. Nay, on all these occasions, they boldly dared the trial, they challenged their adversaries to disprove their words, they defied their malice, and openly, and constantly, asserted—"We are witnesses of these things!"

Their IMPARTIALITY appears in every page of their writings. Their own failings are recorded with singular and unexampled fidelity. They offer no palliation of their conduct—they conceal nothing—they alter nothing—they plead nothing. They sacrifice private feelings to the cause of truth. And with the same impartiality with which they record their own shame, they relate the weakness of their friends, and fellow disciples. We will not say, that no tear fell upon the line which consigned to everlasting remembrance every humiliating circumstance, but that tear was not suffered to erase the narrative; we will not say, that their hand did not tremble as it wrote the sad history, but that hand firmly inscribed the truth, and gave its faithful evidence against the weakness of its master. Neither do they conceal a single circumstance of ignominy attending either their Lord or themselves. They relate all the shame of his death, and the degradation to which their conscience compelled them to submit for his sake.

Their CANDOUR is seen in this, that they never magnified the rage of their enemies: never represented their characters more deformed and sanguinary than they really were: never imputed to them motives which they did not avow: never reviled, never reproached them. When they wrote the life of their Lord, it was without eulogy: when they recorded his death, there is no attempt to inflame the mind of the reader: not a single remark is made throughout the whole narrative: if they wept (and surely they did weep) they wept in silence, and no complaint escaped from their pen. A plain, unvarnished tale, is told throughout, and is left to make its way, unassisted to the heart and to the conscience. Where shall we find

such historians? Even skepticism must admit their integrity, their impartiality, and their candour. We advance,

#### V. THAT THEY WERE WISE AND GOOD MEN.

Who will call in question the understanding or the accomplishments of Moses? Under what circumstances of honour, has his name been transmitted through ages and generations, till, irradiated with all its pristine glory, it has reached even these later days! To a mind far above the common standard—to talents the most illustrious, he added all the learning of the Egyptians. Born at the fountain-head of literature, he drank copious draughts of the salutary stream. Before him the celebrated lawgivers of antiquity, although much later than this renowned legislator, shrink away as the stars which shine through the night, fade before the first tints of the morning, and hide their diminished heads when the sun uncovers his radiance. In like manner, all the writers of the Old and New Testaments demand our respect as men of supereminent talents, and of solid wisdom. No one can read those psalms which are ascribed to the king of Israel, and imagine that David was a man of a *common* understanding. The fragments which have descended to us from Solomon, abundantly confirm the decision of the scriptures in naming him the wisest of men. He must be strangely destitute of taste, who can read unmoved the majestic and sublime productions of Isaiah. We disdain to answer the bold, unfounded, ignorant assertions of the author of “The Age of Reason,” who says, that “a schoolboy should be punished for producing a book so full of bombast and incongruity as the book called Isaiah.” A man who can thus speak of a production so truly sublime, upon general, we might say, universal consent, has forfeited all claim to criticism; and he must feel something like degradation who should sit down to answer so palpable a misrepresentation. We pass over the words of Jesus Christ, for surely it will be admitted that “never man spake as this man.” Luke rises before us, as claiming to rank high in respectability. His writings will appear to an unprejudiced mind impressed with the stamp of genius and of literature. In support of this position is it necessary to do more than appeal to the short and elegant preface to his Gospel, after which, having once for all introduced himself, he disappears, and the historian is lost in the narrative? “Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eye-witnesses, and ministers of the word; it seemed good to me, also, having had



perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee, in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the certainty of those things wherein thou hast been instructed." The apostle Paul is a name too great to be passed over in silence. His defence before Agrippa is a master-piece of genuine eloquence and feeling; and he who can deny it, after reading the sentence with which it closes, appears to us most unreasonably prejudiced, and irreclaimable by the force of evidence. "Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian. And Paul said, I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost and altogether such as I am—except these bonds!" His writings, from first to last, discover an extraordinary mind, and a fund of intelligence, worthy a disciple who sat at the feet of Gamaliel. Those who were unlettered men, have no less a claim upon our respectful attention. Who does not perceive a blaze of genius and of talent bursting through all the obscurity of their birth, and counteracting the original narrowness of their education? They were all wise men; and their wisdom carried with it the most decisive evidence that it was from above: it was "first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and of good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy."

We have pronounced but a small part of their eulogium in saying that they were wise men; for talents are often found united to vice: but they were also eminently good men. They *were* men. We do not design to hold them up to your view as *perfect* characters: for such a representation would neither accord with truth, nor agree with their pretensions: but they were as perfect as humanity in its most exalted state upon earth seems capable of being. The charges against the character of David have been heavy, but they have been as ably refuted.\* The light which he enjoyed was small, compared with the meridian glory which illumines our walk through life. And he must have a hard heart, and a most unreasonable conscience, who can urge David's failings against him, with much severity, after the contrition which he felt and expressed. Considered in connexion with the other, and excellent parts of his character, these defects resemble the dark spots, which, to a philosophic and scrutinizing eye, appear on the sun's disk; but which, to any unassisted organ of vision, are swallowed up in the blaze of his glory. In the writings and the lives of the apostles, what piety, what benevolence, what devotion, what love to God and to man,

\* In Chandler's Life of David.

are visible! What genuine zeal did they manifest! A zeal distinguished from mere enthusiasm, both in its object, and in its tendency! No good man can read these writings, such is their holy fervour, and such their exalted piety, without being made both wiser and better! Do you not discern in them hearts weaned from the present world, and fired with the glorious prospects of futurity? Do you not perceive, in all things, an integrity which made them ardent in the support of their cause, and ready to suffer every extremity for it? Yet that integrity, and that ardour, mingled with humility, temperance, mildness, goodness, and truth? Do they not continually insist upon these things as the genuine effects, the necessary consequences, and the distinguished characteristics, of their religion! O let any unprejudiced person calmly sit down to read their lives, where all their weaknesses appear, and where none of their faults are extenuated, and he must conclude that they were good men!

We might, without departing much from our plan, draw up by way of contrast the lives and actions of the principal adversaries of Revelation, and oppose them to those of its first assertors. We think that the confessions of Rousseau would look but ill when placed by the penitential tears of Peter, or the contrite sighs of David. The licentious life, and the gloomy death of Voltaire, would be a striking contrast to the labours, the patience, the perils, and above all, the triumphant expiring moments of Paul. We shall not, however, pursue this subject. These lives will be contrasted another day. But we will add—that before the patrons of infidelity speak so bitterly of the failings of David, they should place by his life, the conduct of its most strenuous, and most distinguished advocates; and the comparison would reflect but little honour, and little credit, upon themselves. The writers of the Bible were wise and good men. We believe,

#### VI. THAT THEY HAD THE BEST MOTIVES IN ALL THAT THEY DID OR WROTE.

We can only judge of motives from the honest professions which men make, and the integrity of conduct which confirms and establishes these professions. And when we see them acting disinterestedly, and encountering calamity under the profession of kindness to others: when we are persuaded that in no one instance they seek to serve themselves: but that, on the contrary, the plan which they follow must terminate in their temporal ruin—we must give them credit for their professions, and may safely conclude that

their motives are pure. Now, it is easy to prove, that this was the case with the first adherents of revelation, and the first preachers of the gospel. Men are accustomed usually to act either from motives of benevolence, or from motives of interest. The prophets and apostles wrote and acted not from the latter, while there is a fulness of evidence that they were influenced by the former. Under interested motives we may include the love and hope of fame, of wealth, of applause, of whatever may tend to render the man more noted, and more respectable. By benevolent motives we understand, disinterested motives; comprising love to God and to man, apart from every selfish impulse; and such motives as will lead the man cheerfully to relinquish his own comforts for the benefit of society at large, or for conscience-sake. Now, we will venture to make our appeal to infidelity itself, and to ask, whether the writers of the Bible have not a fair and honourable claim to benevolent motives? What interest had Moses in relinquishing the crown of Egypt, to head the insulted, outcast, enslaved Israelites, and to lead them through a perilous journey to the possession of a remote country, over the borders of which he himself never passed, and which he never saw, but at a distance? Had ambition or fame been his object, he had only to wait the death of Pharaoh, when, recommended as he was by talents, the choice of Egypt had probably fallen upon him, and with its armies at his command, with its forces under his control, and with its resources for his resort, according to all human appearance, he might have effected his purpose with greater ease, and certainly would have enjoyed more temporal splendour. What interest had Isaiah, or any of the prophets, in pronouncing, and recording, denunciations which provoked their countrymen, and which superinduced not only immediate hardships and bitter imprisonments, but eventually terminated in their martyrdom? What interest had Luke to serve in overlooking a liberal and respectable profession as a physician, to link his life and his fortunes with those of a houseless Nazarene, and a few outcast Galileans, his wandering disciples? What interest had Paul to serve, in descending from the sphere of applause and of honour in which he moved as a Pharisee, to encounter the danger, the disgrace, and the death annexed to a profession of Christianity? What motives of interest could lead the first propagators of the Christian religion to provoke the fury of an enraged populace, to draw down upon themselves the wrath of the rulers, to oppose the prejudices not merely of their countrymen, but of the whole heathen world, to endure the loss of all things, and to suffer death itself, in defence of the doctrines which they promulgated, the pre-



cepts which they taught, or the facts which they related? Deluded men, infidelity may think, and call them: but interested men, no one, with truth, or even the semblance of truth, can aver that they were! Let it not be said that they expected applause, and were not acquainted with the sad consequences that would result from the line of conduct which they pursued. They were neither fools nor mad; and common sense was sufficient to convince them of their danger. If they had not been originally suspicious of it, their Master plainly predicted it: and they had before their eyes, the fearful evidence of what they were to expect, in his excruciating and ignominious death. They did not surely expect better treatment than their Lord: and no man could, with such an example before him, teach Christianity from interested motives.

In justice to them, therefore, we ought to conclude, that they had the best of motives in all that they did and wrote. As this may be gathered from their sufferings, so also may it be collected from all that they taught. Did they ever say any thing with a view to entice men, or to purchase the favour of the great and the noble? Did they flatter them by giving license to the sins to which they were prone, or by permitting the indulgence of their tempers and lusts? Did they dazzle them with the promise of ease, comfort, splendour, fame, or emolument? Did they not oppose their prejudices, their principles, their vices, and their passions? Did they not delineate Christianity in faithful colours, and paint all the ignominy and danger involved in a profession of it? Surely this was not the way to obtain human applause, or to serve interested motives!

But what did they say of themselves? Let us hear the apostle Paul explain his own motives to the elders of the Ephesian church, in the solemn moment of a final separation from them. "Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears and temptations which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews; and how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have showed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ. And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things which shall befall me there: Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying, that bonds and imprisonments abide me. But none of these things move me; neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus,

to testify the gospel of the grace of God"—“Therefore, watch, and remember that, by the space of three years, I ceased not to warn every one, night and day, with tears”—“I have coveted no man’s silver, or gold, or apparel. Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered to my necessities, and to them that were with me. I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak; and to remember the words of our Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.”—Is this the language of an interested man? and, above all, of an interested man at such a moment? We will not multiply passages in which similar protestations are used, relative to their own conduct; and you are bound to believe them, because neither their lives nor their doctrines were those of persons who are actuated by interested motives. Otherwise, they would soon have relinquished so hopeless a scheme. At the very commencement of their labours, one was stoned,\* another beheaded,† the greater part of them scattered over strange cities,‡ and their cause and their sect every where spoken against.§ You see them, nevertheless, “steadfast, immoveable, abounding in the work of the Lord,” preaching Jesus with all diligence, knowing that their “labour was not in vain in the Lord.” Surely, we must admit, that they were actuated by the best of motives, in all that they did and wrote. Observe,

VII. THAT THEY THEMSELVES BELIEVED, AND WERE GUIDED BY THE TRUTHS WHICH THEY TAUGHT.

This proposition stands allied to the preceding one, and the same train of reasoning will fairly establish it. They suffered death for the cause which they attempted to promulgate, and this was a decisive evidence that they believed it. It is readily granted, that martyrdom is no evidence of the goodness of a cause, or of the truth of the religion which the man believes, and for which he dies. Many have suffered in a bad cause; and many have died for a false religion. The enthusiasm of a Roman more than once led him to sacrifice himself for his country; and superstition has also boasted her martyrs—still boasts them on the plains of Indostan, and among untutored savages. Martyrdom, however, we may fairly assert, is a proof of *sincerity* in the person who suffers; and this is all that we wish to prove in the present instance. We urge the sufferings and the death of the apostles upon you, not as an evidence of the truth of their religion, (it is founded on stronger arguments than these,) but as a decisive proof of their sincerity, and as an invincible demonstration

\* Acts vii. 59. † Acts xii. 2. ‡ Acts vii. 1—4. xi. 19. § Acts xxviii. 22.

that they really believed what they taught. You may add to this, the simplicity of their manners, of their narratives, of their preaching, and of their lives, strongly presumptive, to say the least, of their unaffected sincerity. Nor will any man be able to investigate their characters and deportment, without acquitting them of all design to deceive. The same arguments will hold good in favour of the writers of the Old Testament. The prophets suffered death for their predictions, and those who did not, manifested, by their lives, their belief of the truth which they taught.

They not only believed, but were *guided* by these things. Those only can enter into the argument by which we establish this assertion, who are accustomed to read the Bible; and, indeed, he who opposes Revelation, ought, in reason and in justice, to be as well acquainted with the sacred writings, as the man who professedly maintains it. Upon a comparison between the lives of the apostles and prophets, and their writings, we are persuaded it will be found that the one is an exact transcript of the other. The benevolence and charity which they recommended to others, they felt themselves. The love to Jesus Christ which they taught, warmed their own bosoms. He was the object of *their* faith, of their hope, of their joy, of their worship. In him all their wishes and expectations centred; and for him they were willing to live or to die. They exemplified the Christian patience and meekness, which they recommended to their hearers, in their own resignation and uncomplaining sufferings. They could make their appeal to their conversation and say, "Brethren, be ye followers of us, even as we are also of Christ." Upon every investigation of their lives and writings, it will be found that they themselves were guided by the truths which they taught to others. One more proposition will conclude what we have to advance respecting the writers of the Bible; and, indeed, it may be considered as a concluding inference from all the foregoing series of reasoning. It is,

VIII. THAT IT APPEARS, UPON THE WHOLE, THAT THEY NEITHER COULD BE DECEIVED, NOR WOULD DECEIVE, IN ALL THAT THEY WROTE AND ASSERTED.

That they could not be deceived, is evident, from the nature of the case. We have said that they were, for the most part, eye-witnesses of what they recorded; this was eminently the fact in respect of the apostles. They conversed with Jesus Christ—they saw all the miracles that he wrought—they were present when he expired on the cross. When he rose from the dead, he appeared to them, and to "above five hundred brethren at once." He ascended to heaven



in their presence. He afterwards appeared to Paul in the way to Damascus, and to John in the Isle of Patmos.—We have proved the same respecting the writers of the Old Testament, and particularly Moses. We have shown, that what they did not see, they derived from the most certain evidences, and drew from the purest sources. Now, such was the nature of the circumstances which they related, and the nature of the evidences which they possessed, that they *could not be deceived*. This we think a fair inference from the general train of our reasoning.

And it is equally evident from their characters, that they *would not deceive*. To suppose them capable of this, is to lay them under the blackest of all imputations, and to discover hardened guilt, of which human nature, depraved as it is, appears hardly capable. We have proved that they themselves could not be mistaken: *then*, they must, if they deceived at all, have voluntarily become “false witnesses of God,” and have forged falsehoods from first to last. Their lives were, on these principles, one continued scene of perjury, hypocrisy, and blasphemy. Pretending that God sanctioned their preaching, and sent them for this purpose, while in their hearts they knew it to be false, was impiety beyond almost the power of conception! In every instance they would be found to be liars; and they must, for no possible advantage, but in face of every danger, have deceived their fellow men solemnly and deliberately, day after day, through all their lives. They must have *confederated* to do this; and have stricken hands upon an engagement more terrible than death, and blacker than the designs of hell itself ever unfolded. This impious conduct would have been cruel to the last degree. They were trifling with the dearest and most important interests of mankind—worse than trifling, they were consigning them in cold blood to infamy, to torment, and to ruin. They were leading them to rely for peace and salvation upon a man whom they knew to be an impostor, and who had suffered publicly as a criminal. They were bringing all the calamities inseparable from their religion, knowing it to be false, upon the people whom they deceived. They exposed the lives of the innocent, in leading them to patronise a guilty fraud (by persuading them that it was true) which the rulers did not sanction: and their blood, on this supposition, with the tears of their orphans, of their widows, of their bereaved families, must have mingled with the perjury and the blasphemy of their deceivers, in calling down the vengeance of Heaven against a combination so horrible. They would, in a word, have been a society of the most infamous, cruel, abandoned wretches, that ever lived on the face of the globe: if, as they could not be de-

ceived, they were capable of deceiving on a subject so important! And the men who confederated with them in forming the other parts of the scripture, must have entered into a plot to destroy thousands of lives, here, to send the most dreadful calamities on the earth, and to ruin the interests of men for ever!

Now, calmly examine the writings, the character, the deportment of the writers of the Old Testament and of the apostles of Jesus Christ, and say whether they appear to you to be the men capable of such deception, or likely to form a plot so horrible? What could induce them to do it? What interest had they to serve by it? It is not possible! But as they could not be deceived, so every thing conspires to prove that they could not deceive.

The fact is simply this. Their original talents were not considerable: their education was contracted: their sphere of life of the lowest order: their fears and unbelief abundant: their numbers small; and their minds bowed, in the first instance, by the prejudices of their country, all which prejudices were against a suffering Messiah. When they consented to share his ignominy, it was from a conviction resulting from the purity of his life, the force of truth in his teaching, the integrity of his character, and not from any resemblance which they traced between his situation and their preconceived opinions. Every day developed something respecting him which disappointed their expectations, excited their astonishment, offended their pride, and opposed their views. Their minds were slowly enlightened, and they had not at the moment of his resurrection very clear views, either of their prophecies respecting him, or of his testimony respecting himself. Let these circumstances be calmly considered, let the amount of them be deliberately weighed, and it will be evident to every reflecting mind, that it would be a miracle of the first order, if twelve, or rather eleven (for one of them betrayed the Lord) such men, should have attempted to palm, as a fact, an invention upon the very people among whom it was said to have taken place: that they should have had the genius to project such a design: and above all, that they should have been successful in disseminating their fabrication, and in establishing it upon a basis which eighteen centuries have not been able to undermine! Such a supposition is too palpably absurd to bear reasoning upon. If it be objected, that their subsequent deportment manifests genius, firmness, unbounded intellect, and astonishing energy of mind, a question arises, what was the cause of this change of character! We answer, that this fact is in itself an evidence of the truth of their mission, inasmuch as it resulted from the sufferings and the resurrection of the Saviour: it took place at a moment when there

were thousands of witnesses present—"Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea, and Capadocia, in Pontus and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians:" it was evinced by the gift of tongues, so that the multitude wondered to hear themselves addressed every man in his own language, while many of them knew that these very persons were before ignorant and unlettered; and it was accompanied by miraculous powers, which their adversaries could neither gainsay nor resist, and which were in force nearly a century.

The appeals which they made were not the language of imposition. Neither in their preaching, nor in their writings, did they ever lose sight of the facts asserted in the gospels, and especially of the death of their Master, in all its circumstances and all its consequences. They did not cease to press it upon the memory, the feelings, the hearts, and the consciences of those who attended their ministry; the major part of whom were, in most instances, the murderers of the Lord of life and glory. They laid this sin to their charge, with undaunted courage, with invincible perseverance, with unshaken fidelity, when they said—"Ye denied the Holy One, and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you, and killed the Prince of Life, whom God hath raised from the dead: whereof *we* are witnesses." We have seen these faithful appeals confirmed in their sufferings, this bold and generous testimony written with their blood, this strong and resistless evidence sealed by their death!

On these points we have the concessions of enemies. These things were not done in a corner. Others were also eye-witnesses of this event. The adversaries of the primitive Christians cast in their teeth the poverty of their Master's life, and the ignominy of his death. By these means, while they designed to affix indelible disgrace to the cause of Christianity, they decidedly proved that the facts recorded in the gospels respecting Jesus of Nazareth were strictly and indisputably true. In their public records, in their judicial statements, in their epistolary correspondence, the sufferings of the apostles and first disciples of our Lord were avouched, and their firmness branded with the name of *madness*. It was a subject of surprise and amazement to the heathen world, that men would submit to the most horrible tortures that the cruelty of human ingenuity could invent, rather than deny a poor, outcast, obscure Jew, who suffered, at the instigation of his countrymen, the death of a murderer! Ah, they knew not Jesus of Nazareth! knew



not the secret and resistless bond which held his disciples to him! knew not the sweetness of his love! But, in the mean time, they have left to every succeeding generation a decided testimony that these things were so.\*

We detain you only to offer two concluding remarks respecting the best mode of reading the Bible to advantage. The *first* shall regard the ALLOWANCES which should be made in consulting this sacred volume. Whoever has paid any, the least, attention to it, must recollect that there are allusions to customs which exist no longer; and that its sublime and poetic parts are filled with figures of speech not altogether familiar to us. We are surrounded by imagery, and reading a language perfectly new—more bold and striking than these colder climes and tongues usually exhibit. When you take up the scriptures, make these several allowances. Remember, that you are reading the record of ages which have rolled away, and of nations, which have either long since perished, or which exist no longer in the same form. You should allow for the swelling, metaphoric *style of the East*. Their mode of expression is always bold and magnificent beyond the imagination of a European; and the face of their country is also widely different. You must remember the *customs then prevalent*: these change perpetually with the lapse of time: and the manners of antiquity were altogether distinct from those sanctioned by the fashion of the present day. Consider the *countries in which they lived*. Every country has a mode of operation and habits, peculiar to itself. Recollect the *persons to whom they wrote*: persons who were conversant with the metaphors employed, and with the facts recorded: persons who were contemporary with them, and who had the advantage of making appeals to things and to evidences which exist no longer. And while you call these things to your memory, do not forget the *changes* which have taken place in all these particulars.

Our *second* remark shall relate to the SPIRIT in which the Bible should be read. Consult it divested so far as possible of prejudice, and with a sincere desire both to obtain improvement, and to search out the truth. The investigation which we recommend, lies equally between that inactivity which slumbers for ever over things acknowledged, and that impetuous temerity which relying upon its own powers disdains assistance, attempts a flight beyond the precincts of lawful subjects, and with licentious boldness pries into those “secret things which belong to God.” Some float for ever on the surface of admitted truths, fearful to rise above the level over which they have hovered from the first moment of consciousness. These resemble

\* See the note at the end of this Lecture.

those birds which feed upon the insects dancing on the water, who never rise into the air, but always skim the surface of the lake, on the borders of which they received life. Others, on bold, adventurous wing, rise into the trackless regions of mystery, till they sink from the pride of their elevation, perplexed and exhausted. These, by aiming at too much, lose every thing. Because they have attempted unsuccessfully to investigate that, which God has been pleased to put out of the reach of human comprehension, they will not believe any thing—they embrace a system of universal skepticism. So Noah's dove beheld on every side a boundless expansion of waters; and whether she rose or sunk, was equally bewildered, and found no rest for the sole of her foot. There is one point of difference, and that is, that she returned to the ark; but those whom we have described, too often are found to turn despisers, who "wonder and perish." But the Christian is bold in investigating *all* that God has submitted to his researches, attempts every thing, leaning on Almighty energy, and relies with implicit confidence upon the written word. So the eagle rises boldly into the air, keeping the sun in view, and builds her nest upon a rock.

We would not have you, with the inactive and supine, always coast the shore: nor with the infidel venture into the boundless ocean without pilot, or compass, or ballast, or anchor; exposed equally to the quicksands, to the rocks, to the whirlpool, and to the tempest: but we are desirous that, like the Christian, you should boldly face, and patiently endure the storm, with the Bible as your compass, Hope as your anchor, God as your pilot, and Heaven as your country.

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## NOTES.

It would be a very easy thing to produce evidences from all contemporary historians of the sufferings of the apostles, of their unshaken firmness, and of the undiminished and resistless attraction of Christianity: but we shall content ourselves with the selection of a few.

Tacitus relates the fact of the persecution raised against the Christians by Nero, and describes it as attended by "circumstances of the utmost rigour and cruelty." *Tacit. Annal. lib. xv. cap. 44.*

Suetonius bears the same testimony to the sufferings of these primitive saints, when he says, "The Christians were severely punished—a class of men devoted to a novel and mischievous superstition." *Suet. Nero Claud. Cæs. cap. xvi.*

Pliny describes their worship, while he condemns what he calls their obstinacy, and confesses that they were harmless in their deportment. "They were accustomed," he says, "to assemble, and to sing hymns to Christ, as to God." *Soliti essent convenire, carmenque Christo quasi Deo dicere.* *Plin. in Epist.*

An ancient superstition, the worship of Jesus Christ as God is, if it be indeed what it is represented by Unitarians—idolatry!

The ancient fathers bear the same testimony with these profane historians; and they indeed shared the calamities which they described. Justin Martyr says—“So far from repenting of your sins” (in crucifying the Saviour) “ye sent men of distinguished talents through every land, to represent Christians as atheists, and to disseminate in their discourses all those evil reports of us which those have raised who knew us not!”

*Just. Mart. Dial. cum Tryph. p. 171. Thirlb.*

Yet, amid all this virulence of opposition, the cause of Christianity grew; and while their enemies raved, “To the lions with them,” the whole world beheld them rising on every side as willing to suffer, as their adversaries were eager to afflict. But we shall say nothing farther. If any man desires a confirmation of the preceding Lecture, he has only to read Justin Martyr, and Tertullian.

To the existence and the writings of Paul, Longinus, bears testimony, when he ranks him among the most distinguished men that have ever appeared:—  
Κορνήσιος δ' ἔστω λόγος παντός καὶ φρονηματος Ἑλληνικῆς Δημοσθένους, Λυσίας,  
'Αισχίνης, Ἀριστοειδῆς, Ἰσαΐος, Τίμαρχος, Ἰσοκράτης, Δημοσθένους ὁ Κρίθινος,  
Ξενοφῶν, πρὸς ταῖς ΠΑΥΛΟΣ ὁ Ταρσεύς, ὃν τινα καὶ πρῶτον φημι προΐσλαμεν  
δογματος ἀναποδείκτε.

Fragment. I.—E. Cod, MS. to vat.—Pearce's Longinus, p. 261.



## LECTURE XIV.

*CONCLUDING LECTURE.*

THE UNSEARCHABLE GOD; OR, AN ATTEMPT TO PROVE AN ANALOGY BETWEEN THE RELIGION OF NATURE AND THAT OF THE BIBLE, BY SHOWING THAT THE SAME OBSCURITY WHICH OVERSHADOWS REVELATION, EQUALLY OVERSPREADS NATURE AND PROVIDENCE.

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## JOB XXVI. 14.

Lo, these are parts of his ways, but how little a portion is heard of him? but the thunder of his power, who can understand?

MAN is a needy, dependent creature, from his birth to his death. His first cry is the voice of want and helplessness; his last tear flows from the same source; and in no one intermediate period of his life, can he be pronounced independent. His eye, the moment it is opened, is turned upon another for assistance. His limbs must be sheltered from the cold: his nutriment provided, and his wants supplied by the care and exertions of others: or he would perish in the hour of his birth. A few months expand his limbs; and then a new train of wants succeeds. He must be watched with incessant vigilance, and guarded with unceasing care and anxiety, against a thousand diseases which wait to precipitate him to a premature grave. The quivering flame of an existence scarcely communicated, is exposed to sudden and furious blasts, and it requires all a parent's skill to interpose a screen which may prevent its extinction; and, alas! after all, such interpositions as human skill and tenderness can supply, are often ineffectual, and the prevailing blast extinguishes the sickly fire.

The child begins to think, and a new field of exertion is opened to the mother. He needs direction, and is dependent upon her wisdom and affection for his earliest sources of information. She watches and facilitates the dawn of reason. She teaches her child for what end he came into the world; and in language adapted to

his capacity, exhibits to the inquiring mind, and pours into the listening ear, his high and immortal destination. Oh, then with what anxiety she watches the speaking countenance! With what skill she directs the passions! With what assiduity she strives to eradicate, or at least to bring into subjection his visible propensity to evil, and the impulses of a depraved nature! Who among us cannot look back to this early period, and remember a mother's short, impressive conversation—her entreaties—her caresses—her restriction—and her tears?

The boy advances in wisdom, and in stature, and in strength: but he is still dependent. And now he must pass into other hands. There are many things which it is necessary for him to know, and to learn, in order to his passage through life with respectability, which it is not a mother's province to teach him. Besides, it is needful that he should sojourn for a season with strangers, to prepare him for the approach of that time, when he must quit the paternal roof for ever, and force his way through the wide world!

Grown up at length to manhood, he is still dependent. He lives by conferring and receiving mutual offices of kindness. It is not good for him to be alone. He links his fortunes and his interests, his hopes and his fears, his joys and his sorrows, with those of another. His duties, and his responsibilities, multiply upon him. The circle is widened. He finds others dependent upon *him*, while he is not himself independent. And all his difficulties and sufferings are lightened by being divided.

Behold him stretched upon the bed of death, having reached the extremity of this transient existence, still a poor, dependent, needy creature! To that heart he looks for sympathy: that bosom must support his languishing head: that hand must adjust the pillow, and administer the cordial, and wipe away the dew of death, and close the extinguished eye. Into the bosom of his companion through life, or of his child, or of his friend, he breathes the last sigh!

Revelation meets man on the terms of his nature; addresses him, and suffers him to address God, as a needy dependent creature. It proves its divine origin by its adaptation to the wants and the wishes of humanity. It is directed to every man, as the son of Adam, and the child of sorrow, and the slave of ignorance. But vain man will be wise: will not be instructed: will believe nothing which he cannot comprehend; and rejecting the truth, will not come to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd.

When we speak of magnitude and diminutiveness, of beauty and homeliness, of wisdom and folly, it is by comparison; and each of these terms are exchanged, the former for the latter, when the ob-

jects to which they were applied, are placed by the side of something more magnificent, more lovely, more sapient. The productions of human skill are grand; and we pronounce the "solemn temple" magnificent, when contrasted with surrounding and inferior buildings: but when set in comparison with the temple of the sky, it is magnificent no longer—it shrinks into nothing. I see a picture of the evening: I admire the painter's art in so judiciously blending his light and his shade: a soft and sober tint overspreads the whole piece, and I pronounce it beautiful;—but when I compare it with the sunset of nature, when I see the west inflamed with ethereal fire blushing with ten thousand vivid and various splendours, while the distant mist slowly creeps along the line of the horizon, and forms a contrast to the brilliancy above it, the effort of art is swallowed up in the sublimity of nature—and it is beautiful no longer. I admire the genius and the understanding of the philosopher; I reverence the superior intelligence of a Solomon; I look up humbled to a Newton, exploring the immensity of yonder firmament, reducing the apparent confusion of its orbs to order, laying the planetary system under laws, tracing their orbits, and scrutinizing their nature—and I pronounce these, wise men: but I raise my eyes—and behold a higher order of creatures around the throne of God, before whom even Newton is a child; and presuming into "the heaven of heavens," I am lost in HIM, who charges even these superior beings "with folly."

The powers of the human mind are said to be large and capacious: they are so when compared with those of every other terrestrial being in the creation of God. Man walks abroad, the monarch of this world. Of all the diversified tribes which the hand of Deity formed, into man alone was "breathed the breath of life, and he became a living soul." The animal soon reaches his narrow standard, and never passes it. The powers of man are in a constant state of progression; and probably in the world of spirits they will be found to be illimitable. But whatever they may be in their nature, they are at present contracted in their operations. To what do they amount when called into action? To speak a few languages: to decipher a few more in a various character: to ascertain here and there a cause by tracing it upwards from its effects: to number seven planets revolving round the sun: to send imagination into infinite space in search of other systems, till she is bewildered and tired in her progress: to float on the bosom of the air suspended from a globe of silk: or to sail over the surface of the ocean in a vessel of his own construction: to ascend the hoary summit of the loftiest mountain, or to penetrate a fathom or two the surface of the earth:



these are the boundaries of human effort. And in searching out the little he is capable of learning, what difficulties he must meet! what embarrassments he must surmount! what labours he must undergo! what time he must expend! And, after all, how little has he gained! how much remains unexplored! how uncertain, and probably how erroneous, are his best grounded conclusions! And if we elevate our thoughts to those spirits, whose powers in our limited apprehension are unbounded, we shall find, upon inquiry, that they also are limited creatures. There are subjects present to the Divine Mind which the angels do not know: mysteries, which the capacity of Gabriel cannot fathom, and which the intelligence of a seraph cannot unravel. How much less “man who is a worm, and the son of man who is but a worm?”

The subject for discussion this night is thus proposed—THE UNSEARCHABLE GOD; OR AN ATTEMPT TO PROVE AN ANALOGY BETWEEN THE RELIGION OF NATURE AND THAT OF THE BIBLE, BY SHOWING THAT THE SAME OBSCURITY WHICH OVERSHADOWS REVELATION, EQUALLY OVERSPREADS NATURE AND PROVIDENCE.

Of this unsearchable Being, this infinite Mind, Job writes; and we are now to contemplate rather what we do *not* know of him, than that which we are able to comprehend: since, upon the closest investigation of the whole which he has submitted to our researches, we are compelled to conclude, “Lo, these are parts of his ways, and how little a portion is heard of him? but the thunder of his power, who can understand?” We shall apply these words, in order to the development of our subject,

I. TO THE WORKS OF CREATION :

II. TO THE MYSTERIES OF PROVIDENCE :

III. TO THE INVISIBLE WORLDS :

IV. TO THE WORD OF REVELATION ;—and this arrangement is justified by the whole connexion of the text. We apply them,

#### I. TO THE WORKS OF CREATION.

“He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing.”

To the first gaze of man newly created, the temple of the sky presented itself, filled with glorious objects, which furnished food for his curiosity, and employment for the new-born powers of his mind. He saw the whole expansion covered with stars, twinkling through the blue ether. He beheld the sun rise in the east, and disappear behind the western hills. The moon occupied his vacated seat in the heavens, and every night changed her hour of rising. As yet, the

laws by which these "greater lights" are governed were unknown; and whether the lesser sparks were mere ornaments of the curtain stretched out on every side, or worlds and suns diminished by distance, the man doubted: for, in the infancy of time, philosophy had not kindled her torch, and every thing was to be learned. He regarded it, however, as a scene of magnificence; and considered the whole as the work of him, "parts of whose ways" only, are, after all, submitted to our investigation.

As years rolled on, a multitude of researches into nature were instituted. Art lent her auxiliary powers: a few instruments were invented to aid the eye, or to help the imagination; and a regular inquiry into the secret laws of this great universe, was formed and prosecuted. Time gradually matured the crude and undigested hypotheses of the enlightened mind. Each man took his department. One applied the telescope to the organ of vision, and ascertained the nature, and read the laws of yonder shining orbs. Another bent his attention to the productions of the globe, and to the animals that move upon its surface. A third investigated the properties of water and of air, and the several uses to which they are applicable. A fourth studied the structure of the human frame, and applied his knowledge to the purpose of relieving the springs of life. These all were still acquainted only with "*parts of his ways.*"

When the astronomer has spent his whole life in reading the splendid volume which the night unfurls, what has he at length learned? He has proved that the globe on which we live is spherical: that it turns upon its axis once in twenty-four hours, and revolves round the sun in twelve months: that yonder glorious orb, the centre of our system, is a body of fire:\* that the planets are probably worlds like our own: that the moon appears to have seas and continents, islands and mountains! thus far can he go, but no farther! He launches into infinite space, which Job here calls "the empty place," and is lost! Those lights that sparkle at distances so immense, may, or may not, be suns, and the centres of other systems. All is uncertainty and perplexity; and the comet that shoots across the system of which our own world is a part, wheels through its orbits, and round the sun, flies off, and derides the efforts of man to describe its sphere, or to foretell its return! "Lo, these are *parts of his ways!*"

Human ingenuity and human courage have been exhausted in reiterated attempts to approach the poles: but life cannot be sustained among their horrors. The spark of existence is quenched amid snows that never melt: ices, that resist the impression of the sun's distant rays: a winter that never ceases to rage: a cold that freezes the vi-

\* See the note at the end of this Lecture.

tals! And if the man were able to reach these extremities of the globe, what could he learn more than Job ascertained thousands of years back: that "He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing:" that, having suspended the globe, and drawn its orbit, it hangs self-sustained, as human skill could not balance a feather. Philosophy needs poles to explain its revolutions, and imagination must be assisted by supposing a line drawn through the globe and extended obliquely to the north star: these things the contraction of our powers require science to supply, that we may comprehend more easily the laws of nature; but he who made the world gave it not these encumbrances, and it is poised in empty space, without any support but his command—"Lo, these are *parts* of his ways."

He who spends his life in scrutinizing the minutæ of nature is puzzled at every step of his investigation; and in the open fields understands as little of the unsearchable God, as the astronomer who wanders bewildered among the planets. A blade of grass, an ear of wheat, an acorn, plunges him into difficulties, from which neither reason nor philosophy can extricate him. He knows not how that diminutive and spiral leaf, upon which he tramples, grows and vegetates! Why must that grain of corn die, before it can spring up? and how is it, that a particle in it no larger than an atom, the only part that survives the corruption of the grain, will multiply, and increase, and produce "thirty, sixty, and a hundred fold?" How inconceivable that an insignificant acorn should contain all the component principles of a stately oak, the pride of the forest! In fact, a particle of sand, and a drop of water, are replete with subjects of curiosity and of wonder. The air which we breathe, refuses to submit the whole of its properties to our researches. In vain it is attempted to be exhausted, compressed, tortured—it is understood to be elastic, to rest with an incredible pressure upon the surface of the body, equally on all parts, and we cannot press the matter farther. He who bestowed it alone can make the thin fluid which the lungs inhale to sustain life, the vehicle of death: and he *can* heighten its ratification to a pitch too subtile for the organs adapted to its action, or load it with gross and fatal vapours, and thus constitute it the instrument of mortality in another shape.—"Lo, these are *parts* of his ways."

He who attends to the structure of the human frame, may, from the little knowledge of its parts which he is able to obtain, trace the progress of disease, and allay the fermentation and fever of the blood, by medicine, or by diminishing the quantity of the heated fluid; he may assist the efforts of nature, and counteract, in some measure, by



the skilful application of science, the power of disease: but he cannot restore a single fibre destroyed, nor protract the life a moment beyond its appointed period; and, after all, he can know but the more obvious parts of this complicated machine, while its secret springs escape his most diligent researches.—“Lo, these are *parts* of his ways, and how *little* a portion is heard of him?” As in the works of CREATION, so is the Deity equally unsearchable,

## II. IN THE MYSTERIES OF PROVIDENCE.

“He holdeth back the face of his throne, and spreadeth his cloud upon it.”

Most eminently, in this respect, “*parts*” only “of his ways” are submitted to our understanding; and he who objects to Revelation, because it involves in it mysteries which he cannot fathom, ought, to be consistent, on the same principles to deny the superintendence of Providence, to reject the religion of nature (so called) and to doubt his own existence, all of which include an equal and correspondent degree of obscurity and uncertainty. The history of the world presents scenery incessantly changing; and, without being able to assign a reason for it, we see this nation, rising into distinction, and that, falling into irretrievable desolation. One empire is swallowed up of another. The politics of this world presents a discordant chaos, where all sorts of contrarities are blended together; and it is the voice of God alone that can hush the uproar, and silence the strife; the hand of God alone that can harmonize these contending principles, and reconcile these violent oppositions; and the wisdom of God alone that can command a beautiful world to emerge from this dark, disordered, formless abyss. Here, we see a man signaling himself upon this great theatre, led by an invisible hand, surmounting opposition, and performing seeming impossibilities. The strength of nations melts before him; and with resistless energy he overruns with his forces the mightiest kingdoms. He goes on to add dominion to dominion, till he has subjugated the world; and this, for no apparent reason! Such was Alexander; and modern history may be thought to present his counterpart! Again, we see a large empire dismembered—swallowed up in a night, or gradually mouldering by the revolt of this and the other province—all apparently the work of chance—all indisputably the operation of an infinite, and unsearchable Agent. So the extent of Alexander’s conquests, was equalled only by their rapidity; and with correspondent velocity, after his death, his empire hastened to ruin: till Rome trod in his footsteps, and again held the world in chains. So Cyrus was conducted by an invisible hand to victory; and Babylon fell in a single night.

By the aid of Revelation, we obtain a little light on this obscure subject. We are led behind the scene, and a "*part*" of the whole is developed. One or two of the wheels of the machine are submitted to our examination, that we may gather from our inspection of the construction of these, the harmony and consistency, the wisdom and stability, the power and immensity of the whole; and that we may be convinced that he who condescends *now* to explain one or two enigmas, can, and will hereafter, in his own time and way, explain *all*. We see why Alexander was permitted to conquer—that the gospel of Jesus might be facilitated in its progress by the boundaries of empires being broken up, and a free intercourse subsisting in all parts of the globe: and why Augustus decreed an enrolment—that Joseph and Mary might be called from their obscurity, and the Messiah born, according to the decision of prophecy at Bethlehem. The tide of human affairs, however agitated and impeded by counter-currents, swells in its progress, and amid all its windings sets irresistibly towards the ocean of the divine purposes, in which it is engulfed and lost.—“Lo, these are *parts* of his ways! but how *little* a portion is heard of him?”

If we withdraw our attention from the affairs of empires, and, selecting a family, fix it upon an individual, the same perplexity appears upon the surface of his trials; and the same measure of illumination is cast upon the darkness of his path, when God condescends to unravel a portion of his own designs. We will appeal to the experience of that patriarch, whose singular providential trials have rendered him so often an object of selection to illustrate this assertion. Who, that saw the situation of Jacob, reduced to despair by the mysterious disappearance of his darling son, the detention of Simeon, and the demand for Benjamin to go into a strange country, a country in which his brother was imprisoned, would not have said, as he did, “All these things are against me?” We read these hallowed pages, and perceive that the loss of his first child was to preserve his own life, and that of all his family: and that the imprisonment of a second, and the demand for the third, were the means of the development of the whole, and restored him to the arms of his long-lamented Joseph!—“Lo, these are *parts* of his ways!” How small is the proportion of providential mystery which is explained! How large that which is yet left involved in darkness, and perplexed in endless intricacy! How often he passes by us, and we perceive him not: he works on our right and on our left hand, and we cannot trace him: we hear the sound of his footsteps, unable to behold him! “He holdeth back the face of his throne, and spreadeth his cloud upon it.” On the testimony of the scriptures, a Christian will believe that “all things

work together for good to them that love God, to them that are the called according to his purpose:" but *how* they co-operate is known only to Him who sees the end from the beginning," and whose wonder-working hand educes good out of evil. *We* know but little; and *that* little, how imperfectly! "Lo, these are *parts* of his ways! but how *little* a portion is heard of him?" Again, we apply these words,

### III. TO THE INVISIBLE WORLDS.

"Hell is naked before him, and destruction hath no covering."

We all look forward with anxiety and suspense to that unknown state to which we hasten. When we miss from the circle of our friendships, the companions of our way, we cast many a wishful glance across the abyss at our own feet, and make many a fruitless attempt to penetrate the obscurity that hides its secrets from our inquiring eyes. There was a time when the conscious heart of man vibrated with the palpitations of fearful anticipation and suspense, as he descended "the valley of the shadow of death;" for Revelation was not there to guide and to support his trembling and uncertain steps. Ah, then how bitter was the parting sigh! Then the strained eye-balls were turned towards the mouth of the vale where the last glimmerings of light lingered; and as the invisible hand irresistibly urged the reluctant wretch forwards, horror and dismay suspended all his faculties; chill despair crept through all his vitals, and brooded heavy at his heart; and darkness, which might be felt, oppressed and overwhelmed the departing spirit. Blessed be the hand that has rolled the cloud from the mouth of the grave, and for ever chased these accumulated horrors! "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away!" Now, as we approach that awful hour in which the strongest powers of nature fail, the visions of God burst upon the enraptured sight: the melody of heaven floats along the air, and thrills through the soul of the dying believer: angels wait to "minister to the heirs of salvation;" Jesus, the friend of sinners, is present to close the dim and fixed eyes: an energy more than mortal is vouchsafed; and "death is swallowed up in victory!"

It is no longer a matter of inquiry and of uncertainty, of conjecture and of hope, that the soul is immortal: the die is cast, and the fact is indisputably proved. "Life and immortality are brought to light by the gospel." A thousand dying testimonies have proved the stability of revealed truth. He who emerged from the dark domi-



nions of death, as the forerunner of his people, spoiled him of his sceptre, and bore away the keys of his prison in triumph to heaven. The throne of the king of terrors already trembles, and nods to its fall. "The hour is coming, when all that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and shall come forth." His empire shall be depopulated, his captives set free, his very being annihilated. Rejoice, O ye heavens, for the King of Kings has vanquished the Power which clouded your beauties, and which will extinguish the radiance of your orbs! Rejoice, for the Saviour shall reign till all enemies are subdued under his feet; and "the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death!" Rejoice, for he will create you anew, and rekindle all your faded glories, with a lustre which shall never be impaired! Shout for joy, ye redeemed, for the day of the restitution of all things draweth nigh!—Hear it, ye nations, and let the voice of triumph thunder through all your islands and all your continents! Hear it, ye angels, and strike your harps in sympathy with the sons of mortality, the fellow-heirs with you of the same kingdom; and aid their feeble voices, by adding the melody of your songs to their triumph over death! Hear it, ye spirits of just men made perfect, and blend your joys with the gratitude of your brethren according to the flesh! Sound the trumpet of victory through the dreary chambers of the grave—the long-silent habitations of the dead; and while the unconscious dust lies sleeping in these low and mournful vaults, hail, in your invisible world, ye glorified saints, the dawn of that approaching morning, when your ashes shall be ransomed from the tomb, and time and death shall expire together!

It is also decided that a two-fold portion awaits the departed spirit, a world of endless joy, or of endless wo. A prison where the heart hardens as it suffers; and the vials of divine wrath cannot be exhausted: or a world of bliss, the habitation of God, of angels; of departed saints, of holiness, of perfection, of inextinguishable happiness. In the scriptures, the imagination and the reason, are employed in contemplating regions of horror, in which the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched; but the man who rejected divine compassion is delivered over to remorse, and anguish, and darkness, and despair, and unknown misery: or, these powers of the mind are overwhelmed in the vision of the palace of God, and the unshaken kingdom which he has prepared for the righteous; and as the armies of the redeemed pass before us, the voice from heaven proclaims—"They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them to living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

When you have explored these invisible worlds by the aid of revelation, much obscurity still hovers over them. Their existence is clearly ascertained, but few particulars respecting these unknown lands, have reached these remote regions. We have yet every thing to learn respecting their nature, the nature of their inhabitants, and the nature of the employments attached to them. "Lo, these are *parts* of his ways! but how little a portion is heard of him?" And if *all* the operations of nature, the mysteries of Providence, and the secrets of the invisible worlds, were developed, still *these all* are but "*parts* of his ways!" We apply this language, once more,

#### IV. TO THE WORD OF REVELATION.

Even in this volume "how little a portion is heard of him!"

Here, those truths which are of most importance to us as dying men, are plainly revealed. We feel forcibly our relation to God, "the Judge of all." We behold human nature emerging from the ruins of the fall, and triumphing over the curse. We perceive the devastation introduced by the transgression of our first parent, repaired by the obedience and death of the Second Adam, who "is the Lord from heaven." We see Jesus "made a little lower than the angels" for our sakes, afterwards "crowned with glory and honour," as our surety and representative. He suffered, "the just for the unjust, to bring us to God." He was "lifted up, that he might draw all men unto him." And "through him we all have access by one Spirit to the Father."

The Holy Spirit is represented as descending to apply all the blessings arising from his death to the wounded conscience. The image of God is restored to the heart. The bosom becomes a habitation of the Most High. It is no longer a scene of anarchy, the seat of tumultuous passions; but the residence of peace, and joy, and hope, and holiness, as the pledge of still more refined and exalted felicity to come.

Connected with these solemn truths are promises suited to every possible circumstance in human life, and adapted to all the difficulties which press upon the man in passing through this valley of tears. In this one book is found "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report:" in a word, whatsoever things are "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness." But when you have laid together all the discoveries of this volume, you must confess—"Lo, these are parts of his ways! but how little a portion is heard of him?"

It is freely conceded to infidelity, that there are in this volume "many things hard to be understood:" difficulties which cannot be surmounted, and mysteries which cannot be explained. But who does not perceive, from the train of discussion pursued this evening, that in this very point consists its analogy to nature and to Providence? that it bears the character of the unsearchable God impressed upon it? that it forms a part, and only a part, of the same mysterious plan, and the same great operations, which are carrying forwards above us, around us, beneath us, wherever the hand of God is—and that is every where? Who does not trace in the Bible the same features of clearness and of obscurity—the same combination of light and of darkness—found in every thing else connected with the Deity; and to be expected in the communications made by an infinite mind, to a finite capacity? Who does not see that the same obscurity which overshadows revelation, equally overspreads nature and Providence? Who can deny, on these principles, the position which we wish to establish: that no conclusion can be drawn against the Bible on account of its mysteries; but rather, that they furnish an evidence that it is indeed a revelation from him, who is equally past finding out in all his ways?

All these things are but the image of the invisible God: when you have passed through them all, you are only on the threshold of the temple of his works. He that wearies his eye in tracing the systems that are visible in the starry heavens, and his imagination in conceiving of myriads beyond these, leaves half the works of God unexplored, and an infinity of systems unconceived. He that searches into the mysteries of Providence, and by the aid of revelation unravels a portion of his operations, has only seen, like Moses, a part of his glory, but "the cloud" is yet spread over "the face of his throne." He that explores the invisible worlds by the light of revelation, only sweeps over their surface, but must die to learn their secrets. He that reads in this volume the nature of God, his relation to us, the way of reconciliation, and the plan of redemption, has learned only in part what God has done, and what he has laid up for them that fear him. The tale will be unfolding through all the revolving periods of eternity. Some mysteries will be incessantly explaining, some new discoveries of divine grace continually making—and we shall ever be learning what are "the heights and depths, the breadths and lengths, of the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge." For the present, we leave the subject exhausted precisely at the point where we began: "I.e., these are parts of his ways! and how little a portion is heard of him?"



“BUT THE THUNDER OF HIS POWER WHO CAN UNDERSTAND?”

If the radiance of these material orbs is so insupportable, and the light of the noontide sun blinds the organs of vision: if the mysteries of Providence are so inscrutable, and his superintendence of human affairs so irresistible: if the invisible worlds are so sublimely obscure, and he reigns unresisted over them: if the beams of his mercy shining through the revelation of divine love are so overwhelming; Oh! what must be the unquenchable fire of his indignation! “The thunder of his power who can understand?”

If when he descended in the cool of the day to judge our first parents, they shrunk with horror from the face of offended Deity: if when he gave his law, the mountain burned with fire, and darkness and thunder, and the sound of a trumpet, announced the present God, and shook the camp of Israel: if when he discovered only the skirts of his glory to Moses, he sheltered him in a rock, and covered him with his hand; if when he passed before Elijah, a great and strong wind rent the mountains, an earthquake rived the rocks, and a fire consumed the forest: if, when in the vale of flesh, his face eclipsed the splendour of the sun, and his raiment shone as the light; if when he appeared to his beloved disciple in the barren isle of Patmos, in the softest beams of his majesty, so terrible was the sight, that he fell at his feet as dead: Oh! what must be the power of his anger! and “the thunder of his power who can understand?”

We have heard his thunder-storm in the summer: when clouds have been opposed to clouds, while the mountains and the valleys have returned their roarings in broken echoes. But what is the thunder-storm of summer, to the ten thousand thunders that shall rend the earth, when the trump of God shall awaken the dead; and add to these twice ten thousand more, and they are as the rattling of a leaf to “the thunder of his power!”

Who then can stand against him? Pause and think, ye monarchs of this world, who resist his power! Who would have him for an enemy? Pause and think, ye who madly violate his laws! “Who may abide the day of his coming?” For “he shall sit as a refiner,” to try every work, and every spirit what it is!

Hide your diminished heads, ye that would bring down the Infinite Mind to your finite capacities! Boast no more your conclusions drawn from the limited views which you have of his operations. Use your reason no longer as a weapon against him who bestowed it; lest a dart, launched by an unseen hand, strike through

your heart; and the arrows of the Almighty be lodged in your bosom, the poison whereof shall drink up your spirit! "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way; when his wrath is kindled but a little!——BUT THE THUNDER OF HIS POWER WHO CAN UNDERSTAND?"

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## NOTES.

WE have described the sun, in page 298, of the preceding Lecture, as a body of fire. Such it has long been considered: but modern astronomy has shaken this opinion of antiquity. The ingenious Dr. Herschell supposes "that it is an opaque body, surrounded by an atmosphere of a phosphoric nature, composed of various transparent and elastic fluids, by the decomposition of which light is produced, and lucid appearances formed of different degrees and intensity." And he concludes that it is even probably an inhabited world. We venture not to hazard an opinion upon this novel hypothesis: the name of Dr. Herschell ranks high in the department of literature which he has chosen. But may I be permitted to recommend to the attention of young persons, studying the principles of astronomy, Dr. "Olinthus Gregory's Lessons Astronomical and Philosophical"—from which the above statement is extracted? They are familiar and instructive, amusing and scientific, at one and the same time. It would appear arrogant in me to pretend to recommend in general the works of such a writer as Dr. Gregory: but I may be allowed to express the satisfaction which I have personally derived from them.

END OF VOL. I.





# LECTURES

ON

## SCRIPTURE PROPHECY.

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BY

**WILLIAM BENGOLLYER, D.D.**

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—Μέγα δὲ τὸ θεῖον ἠγεῖσθαι, καὶ τιμᾶν αὐτὸ πανταχῶς καὶ σέβειν, καὶ τῆς ἀληθείας μὴ τὰ πρὸς ἡδονὴν καὶ βλασιν πιθανώτερα δοκεῖν· ὑπολαμβάνειν δ' ὅτι προφητείας καὶ τῆς διὰ τῶν τοιῶντων προγνώσεως ἕθεν ἐστὶ συμφερότερον, παζέχοντος ἑαυτοῦ θεοῦ τί δὲ φυλάσσεται.

JOSEPHUS.

**VOL. II.**

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GRIGGS & CO., PRINTERS.

TO THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE

**ISABELLA,**

COUNTESS DOWAGER OF GLENCAIRN.

---

MADAM,

THE world will justly think, that I am doing myself honour by inscribing these Lectures to your Ladyship: but I can say with truth, that respect, and not ambition, is my motive; and that I feel myself paying a tribute less to rank than to friendship. If an uninterrupted succession of long and kind attentions deserves to be recorded on the memory and on the heart; if gratitude may be allowed a place in literary productions, (a place too frequently occupied by adulation,) I may without censure indulge my feelings, in prefixing your name to a work, which has been encouraged by your approbation, and in part executed under your own roof. You would not accept homage paid merely to your elevated station; and you are sensible of the instability of



human distinctions, while you stand the last representative of an ancient and illustrious House, and are about to resign the noble and venerable title of GLENCAIRN, to the desolations of time, and the silence of the grave. I might tarnish the lustre of your coronet with a tear of regret, if I could not look beyond this close of human greatness: but I hope and believe that you are anticipating distinctions of a superior order; and, who can deplore the resignation of a diadem which fades hourly, for that crown which the Righteous Judge will bestow upon his people, in the day of his coming?—not a star of which can be extinguished by adversity, nor can the force of time, or of death, dislodge it from the head of its wearer!

The VOLUME upon which this work is founded, is dear to you as well as to me; there is, therefore, on every consideration, both personal and religious, a manifest propriety, in dedicating the result of my labours to your Ladyship; while I am gratifying the sincere and unaffected feelings of my heart, in thus publicly subscribing myself,

MADAM,

Your Ladyship's

faithful and obliged

Friend and Servant

WILLIAM BENGO COLLYER.

BLACKHEATH-HILL, KENT.

Aug. 10, 1809.

## PREFACE.

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THE circumstances of the times, so eventful in themselves, so important in their consequences, and so uncertain, when judged only by their present aspect, as it regards their issue, have not merely roused the attention of mankind, but excited the most painful degree of apprehension. While politicians have been confounded in their arrangements, and disappointed in their speculations; while the most extraordinary direction has been given to human affairs; and empires, whose bases appeared laid almost with the foundations of the earth, and promised to be coeval with time, have been shaken and overturned; the inquiries of mankind have been directed in search of a cause commensurate with effects so prodigious; and while they have confined their attention to the projects of ambition, and have separated present events, from the grand scale of providence, as it has been exhibited in all successive ages, from the beginning of all things, their investigation has failed of its object, and their labours have reaped disappointment. The friends of Revelation have contemplated the progress, and the present posture, of public affairs, with no less anxiety than others; but they have regarded them through a different medium:

they have considered the present eventful period as only a link in the infinite chain of eternal providence; and as preparatory to the completion of those purposes of God, which are obscurely intimated in prophecies unfulfilled, and which shall consummate the sublime scheme of human redemption. Under this impression, the subject of prophecy has recently excited very considerable interest: and the speculations of the mind have been naturally directed to that branch of it, which appears more immediately to respect the present, and to look forward to the future. After the very favourable reception which the Lectures on Scripture Facts received from the public, both from the pulpit and the press—I was induced (by considerations similar to those which first roused me to endeavour to engage the attention of young persons especially on the value of Revelation) to consider the argument of prophecy, at this moment so singularly interesting; with a view, hereafter, to extend my plan to other branches of evidence. Leaving the hypotheses which have been advanced, respecting events not seen as yet, to be established or demolished by time and providence, for reasons which I have assigned at large in the Introductory Lecture of this Volume, I aimed at a *selection* of those prophecies which are of the most importance relative to past events, and respecting the accomplishment of which, no reasonable doubt can remain, from the ample and convincing corroborations of subsequent historical testimonies. So far, the plan differs, I believe, from most of my predecessors' treatment of the subject; and the form in which these are discussed, almost entirely so. In a comparison of prophecy with facts, which have been unitedly exhibited so often by different writers, nothing absolutely new upon the subject can be expected; but the manner of elucidation may be original, while the subjects treated are common. I have endeavoured to place this point of Scriptural evidence, in



an attractive shape before the young persons of the present age; and should not these Lectures be deemed to have marked out a plan altogether new, they are surely, in their amplification at least, more than mere compilations. With the same unaffected feelings of diffidence, arising from a consciousness of imperfection in the execution of my plan; with the same desire to reap advantage from liberal criticism; with the same earnest wish to render some small assistance to the cause of religion; and with the same mingled anxiety and hope, with which the Lectures on Scripture Facts were committed to the press; these discourses on Scripture Prophecy are ushered into the world, and submitted to the tribunal of public opinion. It is true, that I expect less from our public organs of criticism, than while I was ignorant that criticism had prostituted itself to serve party, and submitted its once enlightened principles to the regulation of a party spirit. I owe much to some of our periodical publications, however, on the article of criticism, in reference to the former Lectures; and my obligations shall be expressed in their proper place, when the second edition of Scripture Facts, which is now in the press, shall be published. I have followed the same plan respecting the notes to this work; and have placed at the close of the respective Lectures, any extracts of historical testimony, or any literary quotations, which appeared to throw light upon the subject treated, but which would have interrupted the course of discussion, marked out, and pursued in the Lecture itself. In soliciting anew the attention of the public, I beg to express my sincere and fervent gratitude for its past patronage.

W. B. C.



# LECTURES

ON

## SCRIPTURE PROPHECY.

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### LECTURE I.

#### INTRODUCTORY—THE NATURE AND KINDS OF PROPHECY.

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2 PET. I. 21.

For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

IN entering the temple of Revelation, one of the first objects which has attracted the attention of all ages, and which constitutes a grand support, is the pillar of prophecy. Like the celebrated obelisks of Egypt, it is covered with hieroglyphics, which the wisdom of man, and the skill of science, in their combined efforts, attempt in vain to decipher. There is one interpreter whose elucidations never fail to render the inscription intelligible. It is Time. His hand retraces all the figures before the eyes of succeeding generations; his interpretation is recorded by the pen of faithful, impartial history: and by comparing the commentary with the original, we are able to comprehend both the one and the other. This pillar is adamant, and resists the impressions of age. Its inscriptions were written by hands which have long since mouldered into dust; and by persons who did not themselves always understand what they wrote, nor were able to explain the characters which they formed; but the substance of them was dictated by God himself, and the column is his own workmanship. There have been many fruitless efforts made to shake this monument of infinite



wisdom, and to erase these lines of unsearchable knowledge: but the pillar remains unmoved, the lines unimpaired, and the whole uninjured either by malice or by years. The parts of this singular elevation, which stand nearer the roof of the temple, are covered by an impenetrable cloud. The whole pillar was once equally involved; but Time, who has rolled away the mist from its base, shall, at the destined period, unveil the remaining part of it; and while we shall be able to read the writing, he shall announce, with unerring perspicuity, the interpretation.

To speak without a figure, one of the principal evidences in support of revelation, is Scripture Prophecy. The larger proportion of these predictions have been elucidated by subsequent transactions; and corresponding events of an indisputable nature, have fixed with infallible certainty their application to the objects foreseen and foretold. They were delivered originally by men who did not always understand the import of their own language; and the very terms in which they are couched must therefore be considered as divinely inspired. Efforts have been made, on the one hand, to diminish the force of these predictions, and to reduce them to mere wishes relative to the future, which might, or might not be fulfilled: on the other, to destroy their evidence, and to invalidate their veracity altogether, by representing them as productions subsequent to the circumstances which they profess to foretell; but these assaults have been as unsuccessful as they are ungenerous; and almighty truth continues to prevail. Many prophecies yet remain to be fulfilled; but till they shall have received their full accomplishment, till Deity shall fill up his own outline, till time shall point out their meaning and determine their objects, they will continue impenetrably obscure, they will defy the researches of the wise and the learned, they will effectually baffle the ingenuity of man, and every comment attempted upon them, every explanation proposed, can claim to rank no higher than mere, unsupported, uncertain conjecture. But what we "know not now, we shall know hereafter." To future generations the prophecies which refer to the latter days will be as obvious and perspicuous, as those which relate to past ages are to us, who have received the evidences of history on the very facts which they predicted.

He that opposes Revelation as a whole, ought, in justice to its evidences, to examine all its several parts, to weigh its distinct testimonies, and to answer one by one the arguments which are produced in its favour. Modern skepticism has discovered this to be a perplexing and difficult attempt: it has found it easier to deny it as a whole, without even a candid examination of any one of its numerous claims. It is easy to dwell on general subjects, till truth is lost

in a labyrinth of intricate and unconnected assertions. The champions of infidelity only skirmish; they continually shift their ground: they advance, they retreat, they contend now at a distance, now near at hand, sometimes in the open field, and driven thence, sometimes in ambuscade; while the troops of religion proceed to measure their ground with firm and steady feet; they may be said to be annoyed by such modes of attack, but they have the evidence of time, that they are not, and that they cannot be, defeated. The adversaries of Revelation are compelled, whenever they can be brought to fair and open reasoning, to yield point after point; and yet, when they have been repeatedly foiled in every attack upon the separate evidences of Christianity, they still advance bold and general objections to the whole. It is also no uncommon thing to find the friends of skepticism forming a system of their own, which they represent as the system of revealed religion; and having refuted their own production, they demand the honour of a triumph over the Bible, which never maintained the principles advanced in its name, nor acknowledged the theory which is imputed to it by its opponents. It is easy to dress up Christianity in a garb wrought in the loom of their own imaginations, and to ridicule the colours in which they array it: but let it be seen simply as it is, decorated in its native beauty, adorned with its native splendours, wearing its native majesty, and then decide upon the justice or the invalidity of the title which it advances to divine authority.

It is some time since your attention was called to a consideration of the Facts recorded in the Scriptures, and to those confirmations of them, which time has yet spared in the fragments of remote antiquity, and on the pages of heathen records. It is now proposed to submit with humility, to your investigation, some remarks on the truth and accomplishment of Scripture Prophecy. Before I describe the outline of the course which it is my purpose to pursue, something may be said on the undertaking itself. I well know how extremely difficult it is to render Lectures like the present interesting to a public congregation. The Lecturer labours under these peculiar disadvantages: that a proportion of his hearers, not having read upon the subject, are unacquainted with the nature and authority of the evidences which he produces: that others dislike to think so accurately, and to attend so closely as this method of discussion requires: while some are ready to conclude his exertions altogether superfluous. With respect to the two former classes, we shall endeavour to render the subject as accessible as possible to every understanding: and to the last we take the liberty of submitting a few observations on the invalidity of their objections. If, indeed, the subjects to be treated

could be justly ranked among those "foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law," which we are commanded to "avoid, because they are unprofitable and vain," most gladly would I lay aside a train of pulpit exercises, which, while it is more laborious, is perhaps less generally acceptable than the ordinary mode of teaching. But we are commanded to hold fast "faith and a good conscience," to keep "that which is committed to our trust, avoiding," and according to our ability opposing, "profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science, falsely so called, which some professing have erred concerning the faith"—and to expose the "philosophy and vain deceit," which exalts itself against the truth and the claims of Revelation.

Those who imagine that these dark and mysterious parts of the Bible should not be brought forward for the purpose of pulpit discussion, will do well to consider how much they would contract our efforts, how completely they would retrench the word of God, and what an argument they would put into the mouth of infidelity. Is a large proportion of a volume professedly inspired, to be deemed by those who admit its authority unimportant or obsolete? If its prophecies be abandoned, it is reduced to one-third of its present bulk: and the larger part of the writings upon which our pulpit exercises are founded, is thus rendered useless to the ministers of the sanctuary. We are ready to grant that a very few pages of the scriptures would be sufficient for hearers who imagine that doctrinal subjects alone should be produced, and for preachers who dwell continually upon some favourite point or precept. But we "have not so learned Christ," as to regard any part of the Revelation unprofitable or vain: we are commanded, on our peril, to place before you in its order, "the *whole* counsel of God."

Should any be inclined to ask, what such discussions have to do with "preaching Jesus Christ, and him crucified?"—we answer, "much every way." For we derive all our knowledge of him as the Messiah, all the evidences of his mission, all our acquaintance with his character and offices, all our faith in him as the appointed Saviour, from Scripture Prophecy. Jesus himself appeals to this authority: "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me." It ought to be recollected, that the Scriptures of that time were the Pentateuch, or five books of Moses: the historical records of the country; but principally the prophecies. Is our duty or interest less, on this point, than the duty and interest of those to whom these words were addressed? And if we deem it right to consider the prophe-



cies relating to the Saviour, we must not separate them from their connexion with others that have a different aspect.

It may be justly said, that prophecy has employed the most learned and able pens; and that the treatises on it are innumerable. But the subject is not yet exhausted. Every man has also his immediate connexions, in which his individual exertions are received with partiality, and his productions read with attention. This may excuse me from entering upon a subject which has been so often and so successfully handled. Nor shall I follow implicitly the track of any of my predecessors. It is my intention to select a *few prominent prophecies*, as a specimen of the whole; and as an illustration of that branch of scriptural evidence which depends upon prediction. If I can decidedly prove to you, that, in a few *well established* instances, futurity *has* been read, and future events clearly *foretold*, the evidence is as satisfactory as upon any number of instances, however extended; since mere human sagacity could not predict one event any more than it can predict ten thousand: and by selecting, and fixing your attention upon a few objects, your apprehension of the subject will be rendered more easy, your conceptions more distinct, your investigation less confused, and, as it appears to me, the conclusion more irresistible. My design is included in the following arrangement:—

1. The nature and kinds of prophecy.
2. Scripture prophecy distinguished from heathen oracles.
3. Prophecy relating to the Arabs.
4. Prophecies of dying Jacob.
5. Character and prophecies of Balaam.
6. Prophecies of Balaam continued and concluded.
7. Prophecy of Moses relating to the former and present state of the Jews.
8. Prophecies relating to Babylon, Tyre, and the present state of Egypt.
9. Prophecies relating to the Messiah.
10. Prophecies relating to the Messiah continued.
11. Prophecies relating to the Messiah continued.
12. Prophecies relating to the Messiah concluded.
13. The prophecies of Jesus Christ relating to the destruction of Jerusalem.
14. On prophecies unfulfilled.

The present and the succeeding Lecture must be considered as in-

troductory. *This*, is designed to explain the nature of Scripture prophecy—the methods employed in conveying it, and to meet some objections opposed to it: *That*, is intended to distinguish between Scripture prophecy and those oracles which bore some resemblance to prophecy, and which infidelity, ready to try every thing that can disparage Revelation, has attempted to place upon an equality with it: We shall endeavour,

I. To explain the nature, and to demonstrate the various descriptions of Scripture Prophecy.

1. By the term PROPHECY, we mean *the foretelling of future events*: and this power, if we can prove that it did ever exist, must be communicated immediately from the omniscient God: since man has ever been the pupil of sagacity, and the companion of hope, but was never endowed with prescience as a natural faculty. Definitions cannot be too simple to be intelligible: it is our intention to abide by all the consequences deducible from that which we have given, in the future discussion of this important subject: and we mean by it to distinguish Scripture Prophecy from all the impositions which have been attempted by the designing upon the ignorant, from all the fables of antiquity, and from all the dreams of those, who by the exertion of their own natural powers, have presumptuously endeavoured to plunge into futurity, and to divine, in the darkness of conjecture, what time shall develope. We do not mean to say that there is not a difference in the measure of clearness and obscurity with which different predictions were delivered, according to the importance of the subject, or the design of the prophecy: but we contend that all these portions of the inspired writings are sufficiently plain to evince, that they were not conjectural effusions invented by the writer, but absolute predictions resulting from the foreknowledge of God.

2. The METHODS adopted by almighty God, who possesses every avenue to the human heart, were various, and diversified according to his pleasure in his intercourse with the different instruments whom he employed. Sometimes his determinations respecting the future were communicated in *a Dream*. It was thus that God predicted to Abram the captivity and the deliverance of his posterity in Egypt. “And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and, lo, a horror of great darkness fell upon him. And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; and also that nation whom they shall serve will I judge; and afterwards shall they

come out with great substance. And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.”\* Dreams were also employed as a vehicle of communion with Deity of another nature beside prophecy: and they became the channel of intercourse between God and good men, when no prophetic spirit rested upon the latter. Some were designed for consolation: such was the dream of Jacob at Bethel in the way to Padan-aram. Some were sent for purposes of admonition: such was the dream of Joseph, the husband of Mary, when he was warned of the designs of Herod against Jesus, and was commanded to “take the young child and his mother, and to flee into Egypt.” Some were sent as tokens of the divine favour, and as pledges of his friendship, when no danger impended, and no particular interposition was necessary: such was the dream of Solomon, at the commencement of his government, when he was instructed to avail himself of the beneficence of Deity, and when he chose wisdom in preference to wealth and to length of days.

As dreams were the ordinary method of communications from God, while as yet the canon of Scripture was incomplete and inadequate to all the necessities of human nature, prophecy, by way of pre-eminence, was more frequently the subject of *Visions*. In the use of this term we mean to convey an idea of impressions superior to those received in dreams: and we will specify the distinction which appears to subsist between these apparently similar vehicles of sacred intercourse. Dreams took place when the man was *asleep*: God whispered, (so to speak) some future event to the mind, which time was to unfold. But a vision surprised the prophet when he was *awake*; and abstracting him from all surrounding objects, impressed upon his imagination other scenes, visionary, indeed, but which absorbed all his attention. In the mean time, all his senses were exercising their several functions: he spoke—he understood as at other times—only that the designs of God, passing before his imagination, swallowed up all his faculties. For the sake of illustration—Joseph’s was a prophetic dream, when he saw the sun, the moon, and the eleven stars, bow down to him: but the future designs of God were only imperfectly conveyed to him, and their express meaning could be ascertained only by the event itself. On the contrary, Ezekiel’s was exactly what we mean by a vision, and agrees with the representation which we have given of that mode of communication in all its several parts. “And it came to pass in the sixth year, in the sixth month, in the

\* Gen. xv. 12—16.



fifth day of the month, as I sat in mine house, and the elders of Judah sat before me, that the hand of the Lord God fell there upon me. Then I beheld, and lo, a likeness as the appearance of fire: from the appearance of his loins even downward, fire; and from his loins even upward, as the appearance of brightness, as the colour of amber. And he put forth the form of a hand, and took me by a lock of mine head; and the Spirit lifted me up between the earth and the heaven, and brought me in the visions of God to Jerusalem.”\* It was by this last method that he disclosed futurity, almost uniformly to the latter prophets. And we may also observe here, that it was no uncommon thing for the body to be affected by the impressions of the mind; and the prophet to be waisted, under the influence of the spirit, from place to place by rapid and almost momentary transitions. Thus, Obadiah feared to tell Ahab that Elijah had sent him: for he said, “It shall come to pass, as soon as I am gone from thee, that the Spirit of the Lord shall carry thee whither I know not; and so when I come and tell Ahab, and he cannot find thee, he shall slay me.” Under the same impulse, the same prophet ran before this monarch’s chariot to Jezreel. Thus, the sons of the prophets imagined, that at his translation, the Spirit of the Lord had “taken him up, and cast him upon some mountain, or into some valley.” Thus was it also with Philip the Evangelist: “When they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing: But Philip was found at Azotus.” Our Lord, it is probable, endured the same sort of transportation, when he was “led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the Devil.”

The method of communication which the Deity adopted in respect of *Moses*, differed from all these: and whatever is to be understood by the phrase, that “God spake to him face to face, as a man speaketh to his friend,” a superior kind of illumination is doubtless intended. It was the highest degree of inspiration. It was not in a dream, or in a vision, that the divine mind was suggested; but towards this illustrious and favoured individual a clearer and more explicit mode of revelation was employed. And this was a privilege peculiarly his own. There were prophets in his days: but none shared with him this pre-eminent honour. When Miriam and Aaron contended for their share of distinction, because God had also spoken to the people by them, Deity himself thus discriminates between his ordinary communications, and the intercourse which he held with Moses. “Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will

\* Ezek. viii. 1, &c.

make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house. With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold: wherefore, then, were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?"\* It is probable, that by the "similitude of the Lord," we are to understand some such visible symbol of the divine presence as the Shechinah, which on occasions of intercourse with Moses the Lord assumed: possibly more splendid and more glorious than the cloud which hovered over the ark. Thus, when Moses descended from the Mount, where he received the Law, his face shone so brightly with reflected radiance, that the Israelites could not behold him: and from that time he constantly covered his countenance with a veil. This, however, is immaterial to us at this moment: the passage sufficiently proves, that the intercourse of Moses with Deity was more immediate than that of any other prophet among his contemporaries or his successors, and that his inspiration was of a higher order.

Sometimes the word of the Lord came to the prophet in an *audible voice*, although perhaps heard only by himself, and expressly told him what he should say. This appears to have been the fact with Samuel, when as yet a child he was employed to denounce the judgments, suspended over the head of the corrupted priesthood. He heard himself called by name, and supposed that it was the voice of Eli. The reason assigned for this conjecture on the part of Samuel is, that "he knew not the Lord:" by which I understand that he was ignorant of any such mode of communication on the part of Deity: that an audible voice was not, at that period, the accustomed vehicle of conveying intelligence from God to man. The prophets contemporary with Samuel, were most probably accustomed to visions; he would, therefore, have been prepared for the ordinary channel of divine intercourse, but was unacquainted with the method adopted in respect to himself. I am the more decidedly of this opinion from the circumstance that Eli himself, did not perceive that the Lord had called the child, till the voice had twice addressed itself to him: but had the audible voice been an ordinary method of communication, it is to be presumed, when he knew that he himself had not called the child, he would have determined at once from whom the voice came. After this, we frequently read, "the word of the Lord came" to such a prophet, without specifying precisely the method employed: and in these cases, perhaps, we may in general safely conclude that it was by some such voice.

\* Num. xii. 6—8.

There remains yet one other mode by which the will of God was ascertained, which we have not named—the inquiry by *Urim and Thummim*. There have been various conjectures respecting this oracle, the mode of consulting it, and the answers given. Without stating these, I shall give you the sentiment which appears to me the most probable. *Urim* is a word signifying *Light*, and *Thummim* implies *Perfection*: terms employed, possibly, to distinguish at once the clearness and perfection of the answers returned by this oracle, from the darkness and mutilation which characterized those of the heathen world. The *Urim* and *Thummim* were probably the stones set in the high-priest's breast-plate, which had engraven upon them the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. It is supposed that the high-priest stood before the ark: that the question of the inquirer was submissively repeated before God, (which question usually related to political matters, and was designed to ascertain the will of God, as to any affair, or any enterprise,) that the high-priest then looked upon the breast-plate, and according to the lustre from the *Shechinah*, that was reflected by any of the stones, or that illuminated in an extraordinary degree, certain letters engraven on the stones, to distinguish them from the rest, together with, perhaps, some supernatural impulse on his mind, the high-priest shaped his answer. This is the opinion of Josephus, and of the most celebrated Jewish commentators. It appears also from these writers, that none might consult this oracle but the king, or the united congregation.\*

But whatever modes of communication were adopted, the prediction was not affected by the method; and in every instance in which prophecy is concerned, we abide by the simple definition of it which we have given—the *foretelling of future events*.

II. Before this part of the subject is dismissed, it may be proper to notice the arguments, (if they deserve the name,) by which a modern deist has endeavoured to invalidate the evidence of inspiration arising out of prophecy. Had it not been for the former popularity of his incongruous production among the multitude, it would not have demanded notice in any Lectures which could put

\* Consult on this subject the *Encyclop. Britan.* Art. *URIM AND THUMMIM*. On the various methods of God's communications to the prophets, the opinions of the Jewish Rabbies, and the commentaries of their most celebrated writers, the literary reader may consult "A Discourse on Prophecy, taken from a volume of sermons by *John Smith*, formerly fellow of Queen's College, Cambridge; published in 1656:" and preserved by Bishop Watson in his *Theological Tracts*: vol. iv. p. 297—362 throughout. There is so little resemblance between the preceding discussion, and this learned treatise, that I did not think it necessary to refer at all to the work, till I came to the close of my own representation of the subject. See also the note at the end of this Lecture.



in the smallest claim upon literary research. I shall be forgiven for omitting to refer to this profane and illiberal effusion of skepticism, which has now, with its writer, passed over to deserved contempt and oblivion. The attack which he makes upon scripture Prophecy is short, and singularly inconclusive. The following is his language: "All the remaining parts of the Bible, generally known by the name of the prophets, are the works of the Jewish poets and itinerant preachers, who mixed poetry, anecdote, and devotion, together; and those works still retain the air and style of poetry, though in translation." He passes on to show, from these assumed principles, that the word "prophesying" simply "meant the art of making poetry." If his desultory language be reduced to the shape of arrangement, his arguments are the following five: The prophets were only poets,

1. Because musical instruments were sometimes employed:
2. Because Saul was in a few instances found in their company:
3. Because Deborah and Barak are called prophets:
4. Because David is included in their number:
5. Because there were "greater and lesser prophets."

As these are the only principles on which he attempts to shake the imperishable basis of scripture prophecy, we shall answer them separately. The productions which we call prophecies are only poetry.

1. Because "we read of prophesying with pipes, tabrets, and horns—of prophesying with harps, with psalteries, with cymbals, and with every other instrument of music then in fashion."

It is granted that the Hebrew word will signify a *musician*\* as well as a *prophet*.† Neither is this at all peculiar to the Hebrew language. The Greek word‡ which signifies a prophet, is applied in the New Testament also to preachers of the gospel,§ who did not predict any thing; and in one instance even to a heathen poet.|| In the Latin language, there is a word,¶ common both to a prophet and a poet. But does it follow that because it is applied to the singers and musicians appointed by king David, that it does not apply also to prediction? that because it may signify a singer or a poet, it will not signify a prophet? This reasoning is singular; and in point of fact it is false.

\* A sacred musician. 1 Chron. xxv. 3. Parkhurst's Heb. Lex. and Taylor's Heb. Concordance, upon the word נָבִיא.

† נָבִיא.

‡ προφήτης.

§ 1 Cor. xiv. throughout; and 1 Thess. v. 20.

|| Titus i. 12. See Parkhurst's Heb. Lex. on the word נָבִיא.

¶ Vates.

It is farther granted, that musical instruments were sometimes employed. To this circumstance must be ascribed the objection stated above. But it is not true, that musical instruments were always used, or that they were essential to prophesying. Where the use of musical instruments is mentioned, it is also clearly intimated for what purpose they were employed. When Elisha called for a minstrel,\* his mind had been discomposed by the sight of Jehoram, who came to inquire at the hand of the Lord, and who had forsaken the altar of true religion, for the temple of idols. It is evident, that the intention of the prophet in asking for a minstrel was to quiet the agitation of his mind. This is also the opinion of the Jewish Rabbies.† But there follows in this very passage a distinct prediction of events, which nothing less than a spirit of prophecy could anticipate. This is a case in point, which turns against opponents their own weapons, and decidedly proves that something more than a poet is intended by the term prophet: and that the use of musical instruments is no evidence against the fact that events were foretold.

2. Because Saul, in a few instances, was said to prophecy. It is by some supposed that nothing more is intended than that he copied the gestures of the prophets. The word is applied to those who only *pretended* to prophesy,‡ and who imitated the energy of the prophets—"every man that is mad, and maketh himself a prophet."—It is not absolutely necessary to suppose, that the prophets whom Saul met, were prophets in the full sense of the word; or that he prophesied in the extent of the term. But granting this—where is the argument against Scripture Prophecy? Is it objected that none of his predictions are recorded?—It is not, therefore, certain that none were uttered. Is it objected, that he was not a regular prophet? It was not necessary that he should be so, in order to constitute him an occasional vehicle of the divine will. Some of the later prophets prophesied but once. Is it objected, that he was a wicked man? So also was Balaam: yet we hope to prove *him* a prophet. These might be only a company of men employed in composing hymns, and singing them. They might be prophets also: many a divine hymn was a prediction. In whatever way the fact be interpreted, nothing is proved against the existence of a spirit of prophecy. Another argument produced is,

3. Because Deborah and Barak are called prophets—it is added "not because they predicted any thing, but because they composed

\* 2 Kings iii. 15, &c.

† See Bishop Watson's Theolog. Tracts, Vol. iv. p.344.

‡ Jer. xxix. 26.

a poem or song that bears their name in celebration of an act already done." The conclusion must be erroneous, for the principles are false.

In the first place, Barak is mentioned but in two different parts of the Scriptures. In the fourth chapter of Judges, he is spoken of, as the son of Abinoam; and in the fifth, he is celebrated as a hero. In the eleventh chapter of the Hebrews he is found on the list of the worthies, and is enrolled as a great man, and as one who died in the faith. In neither of those places is he once called a prophet. He stands in the same verse with David, and Samuel, and the prophets: but so, also, do Jephthae, and Samson, and Gideon; who were never supposed to be either prophets or poets. But if a prophet, in scriptural language, had meant only a poet—he would have been a prophet; for he is associated with Deborah, in the beautiful hymn that succeeded their victory. "Then sang Deborah, and Barak the son of Abinoam, on that day."

In the next place, it is asserted that Deborah (whom the objector has joined with Barak) "did not predict any thing." The most effectual answer to this unqualified assertion, is to request you to examine the fourth chapter of Judges, from the sixth verse to the ninth, inclusive. "And she sent and called Barak, the son of Abinoam, out of Kedesh-Naphtali, and said unto him, Hath not the Lord God of Israel commanded, saying, Go, and draw toward mount Tabor, and take with thee ten thousand men of the children of Naphtali, and of the children of Zebulun? And I will draw unto thee, to the river Kishon, Sisera the captain of Jabin's army, with his chariots, and his multitudes; and I will deliver him into thine hand. And Barak said unto her, If thou wilt go with me, then I will go: but if thou wilt not go with me, then I will not go. And she said, I will surely go with thee: notwithstanding, the journey that thou takest, shall not be for thine honour; for the Lord shall sell Sisera into the hand of a woman." Here the issue of a battle is foretold, than which nothing is more uncertain. And more than this, the very death of Sisera by the hand of a female, the most improbable event imaginable, is predicted. Every thing was exactly fulfilled. That Deborah did not predict any thing, is proved to be absolutely untrue. And whether she was called a prophetess, because she wrote an anthem to celebrate this victory, or because she clearly foretold the triumph before the conflict began, we leave to you and to common sense, to determine.

He proceeds to object against the existence of Scripture Prophecy,

4. Because David was ranked among the Prophets. "David is



ranked among the prophets, for he was a musician; and was also reputed to be (though, perhaps, very erroneously) the author of the Psalms."

It is granted that David was ranked among the prophets; it is denied that it was because he was a musician. You will judge whether or not he predicted future events, when, in the prosecution of these Lectures, we shall consider the second, the twenty-second, and a variety of other Psalms; in which the sufferings, the exaltation, and the reign of the Messiah, were clearly foretold. Surely it was a prophetic eye that foresaw, and a prophetic tongue that predicted, the parting of the Saviour's raiment, the language his persecutors should employ, the cruelties they should practise, the manner of his death by crucifixion, and the very words which he himself would utter as his life departed, many centuries before these events took place. Granting that this is *poetry*, it must be admitted that it is *prophecy* also.

But here is another false assumption, when it is said, that David was "reputed to be the author of the Psalms." Many are ascribed to him, and doubtless with justice and with truth: but a large proportion of the book of Psalms is assigned to other writers; and many of them are not distinguished by any name whatever. It is added—"But Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, are *not* called prophets. It does not appear, from any accounts we have, that they could either sing, play music, or make poetry." Now, in the twentieth chapter of Genesis, and at the seventh verse, Abraham is expressly called a prophet. Another objection produced against Scripture Prophecy by this writer is,

5. Because "we are told of the greater and the lesser prophets." He shall himself explain in what respects these terms are inconsistent with the pretensions of prophecy. This is his reason—"They might as well tell us of the greater and lesser God; for there cannot be degrees in prophesying consistently with its modern sense." Few sentences in the English language, I trust, contain so much absurdity. You have not failed to remark, that an assertion is made, but that it is not attempted to be supported by even the shadow of reasoning; and in a day of inquiry, like the present, we are not to be terrified by bold assertions. Jonah was but once employed in predicting a future event; and Isaiah was occupied in foretelling the designs of God through a considerable number of years. Obadiah delivered but *one* prophecy; and Jeremiah was ordained a prophet from his birth, according to his own language: "Before I formed thee in the belly, I knew thee; and before thou camest out of the womb, I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a

prophet unto the nations," Jer. i. 5. And where is the impropriety of calling the one the *greater*, and the other the *lesser* prophet?

He thus proceeds to wind up the whole of these futile objections into a conclusion as injurious, as the principles upon which it is founded are absurd, and false. "It is altogether unnecessary, after this, to offer any observations upon what those men, styled prophets, have written. The axe goes at once to the root, by showing that the original meaning of the word has been mistaken, and consequently, all the inferences that have been drawn from those books, the devotional respect that has been paid to them, and the laboured commentaries that have been written upon them, under that mistaken meaning, are not worth disputing about." It is to be observed, that this conclusion is drawn from those five sources which we have detailed and answered; and these are deemed, by him, sufficient to destroy the whole body of internal evidence existing in all the prophetic writings. Nay, he declares it unnecessary to consult these; and denies that they should be heard in their cause. This is a singular mode of argument. By what means can the nature of these books be ascertained? and how can it be decided whether they are prophecy, or poetry, or both, or neither, except they are read and examined? Common reasoners would have consulted a volume which they professed to refute, would have examined a prophecy, before they ventured to assert that it was merely and simply poetry: but the writer in question, has marked for himself a new path. Athirst for originality, he boasts of having overthrown a volume which he confesses he has not read; and pronounces the whole system of prophecy to be poetry, while he allows that he does not proceed upon the contents of the books themselves, and asserts, with unblushing effrontery, that it is unnecessary to offer any observations upon what the prophets have written.

We admit that the prophets were frequently poets; and that they wrote, for the most part, their prophecies in poetry; and if this objector had understood Hebrew poetry, he would not have abused it in the licentious terms which he has used. But it neither follows from this, that the prophets were only poets; or that poets were generally prophets. Samuel is repeatedly termed a prophet, who has left no vestige of poetry behind him; and Hannah, who composed a most beautiful piece of poetry, is never called a prophetess. He that predicts future events is a prophet, whether he compose in poetry or in prose; and that the prophets *did* predict future events, we pledge ourselves to establish.

Advanced as your time is, I must intrude upon it a little longer, before I leave this pulpit. We have now entered upon a new course of Lectures; and with all the uncertainty connected with human engagements, and with human life, we cannot even conjecture who shall reach the close of them, or who among us may fall by the way. If Providence should spare my life, I consider myself in the Lectures on Scripture Facts, and in those which I have announced this night on Scripture Prophecy, as only defending the outworks of Christianity, and as sweeping the brink of a large plan, which I should be rash, indeed, to announce, because some years, at least five, supposing the discussion to be carried on every winter, must of necessity elapse before its completion. It will be my object to keep each course of Lectures as distinct, and as independent of each other as possible; that if death should arrest my exertions, or the religious public cease to accept my labours, those which shall be finished, may stand unassisted, and be considered as a class of evidence, and a chain of reasoning, complete in itself. Should I ever accomplish the design which I have formed, the internal evidences of the Bible will take their turn in discussion, and the glorious doctrines of the gospel, the great scheme of human redemption, the influence of Christian principles, will be considered. But as you and I hold life upon a tenure which a moment may dissolve, I cannot persuade myself to lose sight entirely of those views which I entertain, under a persuasion of their singular importance and eternal truth, of the source of all success in these and all religious exertions, at any stage of these discussions. It may be in the power of men, by strong and resistless reasoning to convince the judgment, and to enlighten, in some measure, the understanding. By the exhibition of powerful eloquence, the conscience may be roused, and the passions moved. But nothing less than the operations of an Almighty agent, sanctioning, directing, and applying the means used, can reach the heart, can impress the spirit, can change the will, can influence the life, can save the man. Some may be disposed to deride this sentiment: it is a sentiment which I hold from conviction; and I shall never be afraid either to state or to defend that which I believe to be true. I am persuaded that the energy which kindled the lamp of truth and feeds its perpetual fires; which preserves it from extinction amid floods of sorrow and storms of persecution; which causes it to shed increasing illumination, and fans it daily into brighter radiance—the same energy is necessary to impart and to maintain the flame of devotion, the fire of pure religion upon the altar of the heart. He, who stood upon the brink of night and discord, to call forth light and harmony,



and “without whom was not any thing made that was made,” must impart new life to the spirit, or it will remain morally dead in its connexion with the body, and in passing over to another world be plunged into all the horrors of eternal death. While an Apostle declares that all the forces which mere humanity can bring into the field, shall be defeated without superior assistance: that “Paul may plant and Apollos water, but that God must give the increase;” I may well be anxious that a divine blessing should give efficacy and success to labours so far inferior, as those which I now consecrate to God and to you. But if he, who “hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and the weak things of the world to confound the mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are; that no flesh should glory in his presence;”—if he will condescend to aid my feeble testimony, I shall not despair, nor shall you be disappointed: but what Paul could not do of himself, I shall not fear to accomplish by his Spirit.

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## NOTES.

### NOTES TO THE PRECEDING LECTURE.

It will not be amiss, by a short digression, to show what this Urim and Thummim was; and we may take it out of our former author, R. Bechai, who for the substance agrees with the generality and best of the Jewish writers herein. It was, as he there tells us, done in this manner. The high priest stood before the ark, and he that came to inquire of the Urim and Thummim stood behind him, inquiring with a submissive voice, as if he had been at his private prayers—‘Shall I do so or so?’ Then the high priest looked upon the letters which were engraven upon the stones of the breast-plate, and by the concurrence of an enthusiastical spirit of divination of his own (I may add thus upon the former reasons to that which he thus speaks,) with some modes whereby those letters appeared, he shaped out his answer. But for those that were allowed to inquire at this oracle, they were none else but either the king or the whole congregation, as we are told in Massec. Sotah, אין שואלין אלא צבור או מלך. None may inquire of it but the congregation of the people, or the king: by which it seems it was a political oracle.”

*Bp. Watson's Theolog. Tracts, vol. iv. p. 336.*

We have spoken of prophetic dreams and visions with their distinctions from each other, in the preceding Lecture: the following observations, which some of the Rabbies have made respecting the difference between dreams absolutely prophetic and those of an inferior order, may not be unacceptable to the reader.

“These ‘Sominavera’ or שומינאברה, ordinarily contained in them נבואות בטליות, something that was נטולת אמת, or void of reality, as that in the dream of Joseph concerning ‘the sun, the moon, and the eleven stars bowing down to him;’ whereas his mother, who should there have been signified by the moon, was dead and buried before, and so incapable of performing that respect to him which the

other at last did. Upon occasion of which dream, the Gemarist. doctors in 'Berachoth,' c. 9, have framed this axiom כן אין אפשר לחלום בלא דברים בטלים. 'As there is no corn without straw, so neither is there any mere dream without something that is *אפשר*, void of reality, and insignificant.' Accordingly, Rab. Albo, in Maam. III. c. 9, has framed this distinction between them, בטלים והנבואה בלה ענין צורך ואמת אין חלום בלא דברים. 'There is no mere dream without something in it that is *אפשר*; but prophecy is a thing wholly and most exactly true.'

*Bp. Watson's Theolog. Tracts, vol. iv. 307.*

The discussion throughout the whole of this tract tends to establish the outline of the preceding Lecture; but its mode of argument is so different, and its composition so dissimilar, as the above extracts will show, that I felt justified in claiming the discussion of the various kinds of prophecy as my own, from the little resemblance between the method of the Lecture, and the learned, laborious researches of this essay.

I shall only add a confirmation of the assertion in pages 19 and 20 of the preceding Lecture, from this same author. "But it is now time to look a little into that place, 2 Kings iii., where, when the kings of Israel, and Judah and Edom, in their distress for water, upon their warlike expedition against the king of Moab, came to Elisha to inquire of God by him, the prophet Elisha (v. 14,) seems to have been moved to indignation against the king of Israel, and so makes a very unwelcome address to him, 'Surely were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat King of Judah, I would not look toward thee, nor see thee;' and then it follows, (v. 15,) 'But now bring me a minstrel. And it came to pass, when the minstrel played, that the hand of the Lord came upon him.' Which words are thus expounded by R. D. Kimchi, out of the Rabbines (with which R. S. Jarchi, and R. L. Ben Gersom agree, for the substance of his meaning) *ובו אמרו במדבר* 'our doctors tell us, that from that day wherein his master Elijah was took up into heaven, the spirit of prophecy remained not with him for a certain time; for this cause, he was very sorrowful, and the divine spirit doth not reside with heaviness.' Others say, that, 'by reason of the indignation he conceived against the King of Israel, he was disquieted in his mind;' and touching this they say, 'That whosoever a prophet is disturbed through anger or passion, the Holy Spirit forsakes him. From whence learn we this? From the example of Elisha, who said, Give me a minstrel.' Thus, we may by this time see the reason why musical instruments were so frequently used by the prophets, especially the Hagiographi; which indeed seems to be nothing else but that their minds might be thereby put into a more composed, liberal, and cheerful temper, and so the better disposed and fitted for the transportation of the prophetic spirit."

*Bp. Watson's Theol. Tracts vol. iv. p. 344.*

## LECTURE II.

SCRIPTURE PROPHECY DISTINGUISHED FROM HEATHEN ORACLES.

2 PET. I. 21.

For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man ; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

THERE is no truth capable of elucidation more general and complete than that it is impossible to judge the future with accuracy from the features of the present. Time and mortality destroy human calculations, deride man's boasted prescience, and punish his presumptuous reliance upon futurity.

Sometimes the foundation of a building is laid wide and deep: the materials used are firm and good: the ground is well chosen: the workmen are numerous: the builder is skilful: the plan is correct: the design is magnificent: and yet the topstone is never brought forth, and the structure is never finished. Death calls the master away to another house: or adversity palsies his arm, dries up his resources, and changes his prospects. That, which was planned for a palace, stands a ruin. The purposed hall of pleasure, becomes the seat of silent desolation. The work which was designed to extort admiration from the eye of envy itself, calls forth a sigh of pity and of regret from the bosom of every passenger. The vision which presented itself to the departed owner of this work, was very unlike this sad picture. Providence refused to fill up the outline which human presumption had drawn; and the event has demonstrated, that he who flattered himself with the completion of his magnificent design, was no prophet.

Sometimes a man sets out upon a journey, with every reasonable prospect of success in his schemes, and of restoration to his family: which expectation, hope does not fail to stamp with the



currency of certainty. But sickness seizes him by the way; and mortality meets him on his journey. He is hurried to that land, "from whose bourn no traveller returns." He forgot to add, "if God will," at the foot of all his plans, and his family are left to sigh over the neglected warning—"Ye know not what shall be on the morrow."

Sometimes, in a family it is predicted that such a boy will be the honour and stay of his parents' old age. He is diligent, affectionate, and obedient: he has every desirable quality. The calculation is made too soon. Full many a blossom, that expanded its bosom to the spring, falls from the tree, and leaves no fruit behind it. He is ensnared by temptation. He falls the victim of sin and of misery; and the premature grave that opens to receive him, closes upon the hope, the pride, the happiness of his fond parents for ever! Again, others are marked as a future curse. Froward, untractable, and insolent, they seem formed only to pierce the bosom that nourished them. But some gentle providence rouses, and the hand of God changes, them. Like the disobedient son in the gospel, they say, "I will not," to the voice of parental solicitation, and in some happier moment repent, and obey the command which they opposed. Human sagacity is frustrated; and human penetration deceived. The first is made last, and the last becomes first.

The little, therefore, that man knows is confined to the present; and that little is slowly acquired. The standard of our powers is not reached at once. The child advances by tardy degrees to the maturity of his judgment; and by the aid of much culture attains at length "the fulness of the stature" of his mind. Every day adds some stroke to the painting; widens and swells the original outline; till years give harmony, consistency, and beauty to the whole piece. Our conceptions are always rude at first; and are moulded into shape, or polished into splendour, by the hand of time. We find occasion often to alter our original plan; often to deviate from it; often to abandon the first idea altogether. The most simple device of art required time to bring it to perfection. The rudest hut of our forefathers was not erected in one day: and in that rough outline are to be traced the principles upon which the palace of the monarch, and the temple of religion, were afterwards, by the wonderful progression of human powers towards perpetual improvement, founded. Such is man!—capable of almost boundless advancement, yet in his clearest conceptions and his wisest arrangements, acquiring time to touch and to retouch, to alter and to deliberate, to prosecute and to mature his designs.

But God is the same perfectly wise Being from first to last.

“His ways are not as our ways, and his thoughts are not as our thoughts; his understanding is infinite.” His conceptions and plans are complete from the beginning. Years can add nothing to the stores of his knowledge. The magnitude and extent of his schemes perplex, distract, and overwhelm us. We are unable to hold the several links of the infinite chain together; and living but an hour, we cannot comprehend designs which grasp eternity. The past, the present, and the future, are all before him, are all alike to him. His purpose, his providence, and his work are all united. Thousands of years may intervene between the design and its accomplishment, but the thread is unbroken. A few months’ delay in our plans abates our ardour, and frequently makes us relinquish them altogether. But centuries revolve, and the purpose of Deity continues the same; his providence is silently and secretly fulfilling his pleasure; and the issue, although delayed to the thousandth year, is infallibly certain. Whenever he has poured a little ray of light upon the future, and directed the human eye to follow it, and the human tongue to declare it, the event has justified the prediction; and the inference is irresistible, that while man “knoweth not what a day may bring forth;” God “sees the end from the beginning.”

Every thing that is excellent and desirable has its counterfeit. Revelation has sometimes had her claims denied; and sometimes her majesty imitated; but unaltered by any mode of attack, and disdainful to shrink from inquiry, she submits her pure gold to the crucible of truth, secure that it shall come brighter from that furnace which detects and consumes baser metals. Some have endeavoured to add to the volume of inspiration, and some to take away from it: and one of the strongest evidences of its authenticity is, that it remains what it was from the beginning, uninjured by all the hands through which it has passed, and unimpaired by the assaults of all those adversaries, who have in their turns been vanquished by time and by death. Scripture prophecy has been imitated; and the friends of skepticism urge against it, what they profess to deem a counterpart in heathen oracles; and because these were, for the most part, built upon the chicanery of interested men, they have ungenerously attempted to prove, that all predictions of futurity are founded upon the same basis, rise from the same source, and proceed from cunning on the one hand, and from ignorance and superstition on the other. In entering upon a course of Lectures on Scripture Prophecy, it can neither be unnecessary nor unprofitable to discriminate between things which essentially differ, but which the art or the ignorance of man has often blended. Our leading object in the present Lecture is this; and we shall, as your time may allow, or circumstances shall dictate, blend with this discussion some remarks

respecting the distance between the prophecy and the events predicted in most instances; as also the uses to which the doctrine of Scripture Prophecy, if it can be established, may be applied. We shall endeavour,

I. To distinguish Scripture Prophecy from heathen oracles.

1. Before this difference is specified, it may be proper to say something respecting the nature and the number of the heathen oracles.

In respect to their NATURE, there has been large discussion, and considerable diversity of opinion. Some writers have ascribed them to the influence of demons; and others altogether to the cunning and artifice of the persons employed to deliver them. While there was indisputably much of the last, I confess that I am also inclined to admit something of the former. I give it only as my *opinion*, upon which, as upon the strength or weakness of every other point advanced in these Lectures, you will form your own judgment, after having candidly weighed the evidences produced, and the reasons assigned. If the existence of evil spirits be admitted, (which cannot now form a subject of discussion, whatever it may do hereafter,) there is reason to conclude, that the heathen world was peculiarly under their influence. The lands which the light of Revelation had not visited, may be considered as the seat of empire, to the powers of darkness. There are two reasons why, in some striking cases, I imagine the answers delivered by the heathen oracles to be prompted by demons.

First, because in some few instances, a knowledge beyond the compass of human ability was displayed. There were two memorable trials made of the veracity of oracles, and admitted by no less an historian than Rollin,\* whose depth of research, accuracy of statement, and fidelity of narration, stand unrivalled. Cræsus commanded his ambassador to ask the oracle, at a stated time determined between them, what the monarch was doing. The oracle of Delphos replied, that "he was causing a tortoise and a lamb to be dressed in a vessel of brass"—which was the fact. At Heliopolis a similar trial was made by the emperor Trajan. He sent a letter sealed up, to which he demanded an answer without its being opened. The oracle commanded a blank paper to be folded, sealed, and delivered to him; to the no small surprise of the emperor, who had written nothing in the letter which he had sent to the oracle. It is not necessary to suppose that in general demons have a knowledge of futurity: but in some instances it might be permitted as a punishment for the blindness and idolatry, the pride and superstition of the heathen world. The early Fathers have generally

\* Rol. Anc. Hist. vol. i. p. 54, preface.



maintained this sentiment; and their opinion ought to have some weight, as they lived near the scene of action, and on the brink of the time in question. Nor is a partial impulse upon the minds of men by evil spirits more extraordinary or unreasonable, than the possession which in the time of our Lord prevailed over the bodies of men; and the doctrine of actual possession has never, in my mind, been overthrown.

Secondly, heathen oracles ceased at an early stage of the propagation of Christianity; an instance, as I conceive, of the fall of the kingdom of Satan. This sentiment has been opposed, and it has been asserted, that their cessation was gradual, and that they fell into disrepute as the superior light of Christianity extended, but not for a considerable time after its prevalence in the world. It has been said that the emperor Julian consulted them; which he could not do except they had been in existence long after the preaching of Christianity. But it has been proved that Julian "had recourse to magical operations," quite a distinct thing from the consultation of oracles, and that it was "because oracles had already ceased: for he bewailed the loss of them, and assigned weak reasons for that loss, which St. Cyril has vigorously refuted; adding *that he never could have offered such, but from an unwillingness to acknowledge, that when the world had received the light of Christ, the dominion of the Devil was at an end.*"\* It has been farther added, as an evidence that heathen oracles continued after the propagation of Christianity, that the Christian emperors issued laws against them; but it has also been justly observed, that "the edicts of those princes do not prove that oracles actually existed in their times, any more than that they ceased in consequence of their laws;" and that "it is certain that these oracles were, for the most part, extinct before the conversion of Constantine." The superstition and predilection of the multitude for oracles might exist long after the oracles themselves; for men slowly resign prejudices of all sorts, and religious prejudices especially. The laws of these emperors were designed probably to subdue these prejudices, or at least to control their injurious operation. The evidences on both sides ought to be carefully examined and impartially balanced; and it is probable, that facts have been seen magnified or diminished according to the prejudices of respective writers on both sides of the question. Tertullian offers that any Christian, on pain of death, shall engage to make these oracles confess themselves demons.† Juvenal speaks of the cessation of the Delphian

\* See Encyc. Brit. b. xiii. P. 1. Art. *Oracle*.

† Nisi se dæmones confessi fuerint, Christiano mentiri non audentes, ibidem

oracle.\* Lucan bears the same testimony.† Theodoret speaks of the decline of the same oracle; and its reputed answer to the consultations of Julian is well known.‡ “Tell the king—the well-constructed palace is fallen to the ground:—Phœbus has neither a cottage, not the prophetic laurel, nor the speaking fountain; and even the beautiful water is extinct.”

But although we ascribe some of these oracles to the agency of demons, we are willing to allow that the most of them were the productions of art and cunning. It is universally admitted that the Delphian priestess suffered herself to be corrupted by presents, and framed her answers accordingly. Demosthenes publicly accused the Pythian oracle of being bribed to speak in favour of Philip; and charged the Athenians to give no credit to her.§

With regard to NUMBER, they were so multiplied, that it will not be possible to do more than to recapitulate a few leading features, which have been traced by various writers, of the principal of them. The most considerable was the oracle of Apollo at Delphos, an ancient city of Phocis in Achaia, situated upon a declivity about the middle of Mount Parnassus, and surrounded by precipices.

The oracle of Dodona|| was consecrated to Jupiter: who is also deemed the father of oracles; although he yielded in the renown and popularity of his predictions to the Delphian Apollo. The mode of answering inquiries at this seat of superstition, appears to have been, by hanging certain instruments on the tops of oaks, which when shaken by the wind gave a confused sound, the priests interpreting the noise as they thought proper.

The oracles of Trophonius in Bœotia, were also held in high estimation. After much ceremony the inquirers entered the cave,

illius Christiani procacissimi sanguinem fundite, *Tertull. Apologet. p. 24. Lutet. edit. 1634.*

\* — Delphis oracula cessant. *Juv. Sat. vi. l. 554.*

† Non ullo secula dono

Nostra carent majore Deum, quam Delphica sedes  
Quod siluit. *Luc. Lib. v.*

‡ Εἶπατε τῷ βασιλεῖ, χαμαὶ πέσε δαίδαλος αὐλά,  
οὐκέτι Φοῖβος ἔχει καλύβαν, ἔ μαντιδα δάφνην,  
οὐ πάγαν λαλέεσσαν, ἀπέσβετο καὶ καλὸν ὕδωρ.

See Potter's *Antiq. of Greece*, Vol. 1. Chap. 9. p. 282.

§ He said that “*the Pythoness Philippised.*”

|| Respecting this place there has been much controversy. Some place it in Thessaly, and some in Epirus. Those who adhere to Epirus, doubt whether it was in Thesprotia, or Chaonia. Some contend that there were two Dodonas: one in Thessaly and one in Epirus. Rollin calls it a city of the Molossians; and Archbishop Potter, after stating these different opinions, seems to agree with him.

whence they returned melancholy and listless, stupified possibly by some vapour which might arise within it, and were a considerable time before they recovered, having, as they imagined, seen and heard wonderful things.

The whole amount of oracles in more or less repute in the heathen world, is estimated at not fewer than three hundred. It would be a wanton waste of your time to enlarge upon the different characters and pretensions of these; especially as they are all inferior and subordinate to those which we have named, and selected as a specimen of the whole. But it is of more importance that we should mark,

2. The Distinction subsisting between the best and wisest of these Oracles, and Scripture Prophecy. They are dissimilar in every leading point; and their highest pretensions, on the testimony of the history of their times, can never rank with the claims and the evidences of the sacred predictions.

The first distinction which I shall mark relates to the MANNER of their delivery. When the priestess had passed through the preparatory ceremonies, and had inhaled the celebrated vapour over which her tripod was placed, her gestures and sensations amounted to absolute madness. A trembling shook her whole frame: her looks were wild and distracted; she foamed at the mouth; her hair became erect; her shrieks and howlings filled the temple; and heathen historians add, that the building itself shook to its very foundations. During these fearful agitations, at certain intervals, unconnected words fell from her lips. These were carefully collected by the priests who surrounded her, and from them the oracle was framed. These distortions and this vehemence, were not peculiar to the priestess of Delphos, but seem universally to characterize heathen oracles. Lycophron represents Cassandra as infuriate in the same measure as this Pythian priestess is described by Lucan.\* Heraclitus says that “the declamations of the Sibyl were indecorous and ridiculous,” and that they were pronounced from a raving mouth.”† Ammianus Marcellinus speaks of this violence as a proverbial notoriety.‡ Virgil describes, with his wonted force and eloquence, the vehemence and madness of the prophetess.§ It required several

\* See also Lucan, lib. v.

† Ως μαινομένη σόματι γελασά καὶ ἀκαλλάπιστα φεγγομένη.

‡ Sibyllæ crebro se dicunt ardere, torrente vi magnâ flammæ. Amm. Marc. lib. xxi. in principio.

Consult on this subject, Rollin, vol. i. pref. Potter's Antiq. of Greece, vol. i. 278. Bp. Watson's Theolog. Tracts, vol. i. p. 314.

§ See Virgil's *Æn.* lib. vi. v. 46—51. For extracts and general evidences, consult the notes at the end of this Lecture.



days, after she was re-conducted to her cell, to recover her from her fatigue, and to restore her exhausted frame to its wonted vigour. Sometimes her life was the forfeit of her exertions; and this excessive raving was followed by sudden death.

To this madness stands opposed the calm and dignified manners of the prophets, when they foretold future events. It is true that they were elevated by the majesty of their subject. They were wrapt and inspired by the visions of the Almighty. They were moved with pity or with indignation, when men trifled with the judgments pronounced. Sanctioned by the usages of the times, and transported by the force of their commission, they rent their clothes and their hair; they stamped with their foot, and smote upon their thigh. But they maintained the calm possession of all their faculties; and never discovered the characteristics of a maniac. They were zealous, but not furious: and their energy was distinct from raving. I cannot but think that God himself marks strongly the contrast between the manner of delivering oracles, and the calm possession of their reasoning faculties, the majesty, the truth of his prophets. "I am the Lord that maketh all things, and stretcheth forth the heavens alone, that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself. That frustrateth the tokens of liars, *and maketh the diviners mad*; that turneth wise men backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish: That confirmeth the word of my servant, and performeth the counsel of my messengers."\* In one word, the pronouncers of oracles were always transported out of themselves; and the prophets of the Lord always preserved a noble tranquillity of deportment.

The second distinction which I shall point out relates to the TIME of their delivery. The oracles were issued only at stated periods. Their gods were not always propitious. At first the priestess of Delphos could be approached but once a year: afterwards she was accessible monthly. All days were not deemed proper; and upon some no answer could be obtained. Alexander wished to consult the oracle upon one of those unpropitious days: but was absolutely refused by the priestess. The conqueror of the world did not understand ceremony; and thought that "nice customs should stoop to great kings." He dragged the struggling priestess, and seated her by force on the tripod, while she exclaimed, "My son, thou art invincible;" and Alexander declared that she might spare herself farther trouble, for *that* was an oracle entirely to his satisfaction.† We have already seen, that as force could

\* Isa. xliv. 24—26.

† On this point consult Plutarch, Græc. quæst. 9. Anc. Univ. Hist. vol. v. b. 1, note F. p. 610. Dublin edit. 1745. Potter's Antiq. vol. 1, chap. 9, p. 278. For the

command the time, gold could occasionally dictate the answer; and this is a consideration worthy to be remarked and remembered; and which we shall not pass by, as we pursue the distinctions evidently subsisting between this corrupted superstition and Scripture Prophecy.

Respecting the prophets of the Lord, we find none of this caution. No seasons were improper. They were always accessible; and to the devout inquirer God was always propitious. There was no delay attending the answer. Either he disdained to notice the application at all, when it came from such a character as Saul, whose iniquities had separated him from the divine favour: or the direction was vouchsafed immediately. Rank and wealth had no influence in framing the answer. The poor were often filled with joy, while the rich were sent empty away. Unrighteous kings were reprov'd with the fidelity, the plainness, and the severity of truth; and the prophets, not unfrequently, passed from the royal presence into a prison, as a punishment for their sincerity. They often suffered, but they never stooped to flatter.

The Third distinction relates to the PLACE where they were delivered. The heathen oracles were delivered in secret and obscure places, in by-ways, in dark caverns, and from the inmost recesses of temples. Who does not perceive that such places were favourable to fraud? and that these very circumstances are of themselves sufficient to awaken suspicion? All was as mysterious and as blind as possible. Pausanias, who consulted in person the oracle of Trophonius, after a long description of the ablutions and services previously required, represents at large the circumstances in which he was placed. He speaks of the visible and outward cave, not as a natural cavity, but as "built with the nicest mechanism and proportion." The entrance of this cavern has no steps, but the person who wishes to consult the oracle must provide himself with a light and narrow ladder: and having descended this external cavern, which may be considered as a porch to the oracle, the cave itself of Trophonius is situated "between the roof and the pavement." "At the mouth of this, the descendant, having brought with him cakes dipped in honey, lies along on the ground, and shoves himself feet foremost into the cave; then he thrusts in his knees; after which the rest of his body is rolled along, by a force not unlike that of a great and rapid river, which overpowering a man with its vortex, tumbles him over head and ears. All that come within the ap-

proach of the oracle, have not their answers revealed the same way. Some gather their resolves by outward appearances; others by word of mouth. They all return the same way back with their feet foremost.”\* None ever lost their lives in this cavern, except one man, who meant to rob the sanctuary of the wealth deposited there by the superstitious. Every one returns, bewildered and stupified from some cause, from the cave. This is the testimony of Pausanias; and it is sufficiently explicit to discover how much of art and of chicanery might be practised, in a place so constructed, upon those, who, being prepared for something supernatural, require very little to strengthen the delusion which their imagination was of itself ready to impose upon their senses.

Scripture prophecy forms a striking and noble contrast to these pitiful expedients. Here was no collusion, and no mystery. No cheat was attempted or practised on the senses. There were no secret avenues, no dark recesses, no obscure retreats. All was open as the day. The prophets delivered their messages wherever and whenever they were required, and in the face of the world. Sometimes the predictions were delivered in the palaces of rebellious kings, and sometimes in the centre of devoted cities: sometimes in the prophet's house, and at others in the assembly of the Elders: but always openly. Does not God himself allude to this distinction between his own predictions, and the secrecy attending the delivery of heathen oracles, when he says, “*I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth?*”†

The fourth distinction relates to the CEREMONIES required and practised in the consultation of oracles. Vast preparations were made on every such occasion. The priestess herself was compelled to fast three days, to bathe in the fountain of Castalia, to drink copiously of the water, to shake the laurel tree that grew on its brink, and to chew some of its leaves. Sacrifices that lacked neither splendour nor solemnity were presented daily, till the omens were favourable, and an answer was vouchsafed. Not an iota of the ceremonial prescribed was to be omitted; and a single informality would suspend the whole process, and rendering nugatory all that preceded, compel all the services to recommence.‡ All the majesty of form was maintained, but alas! the spirit of religion was not there. It was also expected that those who consulted the oracle should make large presents to the god, whose name sanctioned the avarice of the priests; so that the temple of Delphos surpassed all others in

\* Abp. Potter's *Antiq. of Greece*, vol. i. p. 291.

† *Is.* xlv. 19.

‡ Rollin's *Anc. Hist.* vol. i. Pref. *Anc. Univ. Hist.* vol. v. p. 610.



riches, splendour, and magnificence.\* Nor was this requisition peculiar to the shrine of Apollo; it was an essential part of the system, throughout the whole heathen world, that whoever would consult the pretended divinity, must see the selfish priest.

You discern no such parade in the dispensation of Scripture Prophecy. When God was approached, only the usual sacrifices were presented; and he was frequently consulted without any previous offering. When sacrifices were presented, it was not with a view to propitiate the Deity, which was the sole object of the ceremonies of the heathens. Till the answer was given, the god was adored; and when it was once obtained, he was forgotten. Presents were sometimes sent to the prophets; but these were tokens of personal respect to them, and were not intended as an offering to God. They were never required; and were always refused when they were intended as a recompense to the prophet in his sacred character, or as a reward for the performance of his duty. Thus, Elijah refused, peremptorily, any presents from Naaman. Frequently the prophets of the Lord suffered persecution even to death, for the integrity with which they pronounced the truths committed to their trust. No king could corrupt them. Ahab said of Micaiah, "I hate him, for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil." Balaam, whose heart was the seat of avarice, did not dare, so long as God chose to employ him as an instrument, to suffer himself to be corrupted by presents. He was constrained to abjure the gold which he devoured with his wishes, when it was offered as a bribe that he should deliver a favourable oracle. "If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord, to do less or more." To what sufferings and imprisonments did Jeremiah's predictions expose him! Samuel, at the end of a long administration as a prophet; and as a judge, could say, "Behold here I am; witness against me before the Lord and before his anointed; whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I received any *bribe*, to blind mine eyes therewith? and I will restore it you. And the people said, Thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken aught of any man's hand. And he said unto them. The Lord is witness against you, and his anointed is witness this day, that ye have not found aught in my hand. And they answered, He is witness."† Which of the priests that conducted the heathen oracles, could make such an appeal?

\* Abp. Potter's *Antiq. of Greece*, vol. i. p. 278, 279.

† 1 Sam. xii. 3—5.

or produce, like the prophets of the Lord, a palm unstained by bribery?

The Fifth and the grand distinction relates to MATTER. Rollin has with much justice and force given a description of heathen oracles. He says, "Their general characteristics were *ambiguity, obscurity, and convertibility*;" that is to say, the "answer would agree with several various, and sometimes directly opposite events." The prediction was so framed, that whatever should be the issue, the oracle might not lose its credit and popularity. There are two instances in point, which are also generally known; and they shall suffice as an illustration of this position. When Cræsus was about to invade the Medes and Persians, he consulted the oracle at Delphos as to the issue of his expedition. The answer was, that "by passing the river Helys, and making war upon the Persians, he would ruin a great empire." What empire? Was his own, or that of the Medes, to be ruined? One of these two opposite events was certain; and in either case the oracle would be right. Men are always ready to believe that which they wish. Cræsus flattered himself that the ruin of the Persians was intended. He made the attempt—lost his crown—and was on the point of losing his life. In like manner when Pyrrhus made war upon the Romans, he consulted the same oracle. With matchless address the answer was couched in a single line in Latin,\* which cannot be so rendered into English as to express the equivocal construction of the original: but from the arrangement of the words, it may be read, either "that Pyrrhus should conquer the Romans;" or "that the Romans should conquer Pyrrhus." The issue is well known: Pyrrhus returned mortified and defeated, to his country, after a long and disastrous struggle. Tertullian appeals to these instances in charging the heathen oracles with subtle ambiguity;† and such was their general character.

The contrast to this darkness and equivocation will be found in the clearness and perspicuity of prophecy, as we pursue the future discussion of this interesting part of divine revelation. In general, the prediction is so decisive, that the event appears only a transcript of the prophecy. Language capable of a double or changeable construction, is never employed: and when obscurity hovers over the prophecy, it arises from one of these three causes: either it is not accomplished, and has not received the interpreta-

\* Aio te, Æacida, Romanos, vincere posse!

† In oraculis autem, quò ingenio ambiguitates temperent in eventus, sciunt Cræsi. sciunt Pyrrhi. Tertull. Apologet. p. 24. Lutet. edit. 1634. See also Rollin's Anc. Hist. vol. i. Pref. p. 54. Encyc. Brit. vol. xiii. Part 1. Art. *Oracle*.

tion of providence: or the history which should elucidate it has perished with the wrecks of time, or we are ignorant of the imagery, the customs, or the language itself, in which it is contained, and to which it relates. Those, therefore, who wish to draw a parallel between Scripture Prophecy and heathen oracles, for the sake of placing them upon the same basis, tracing them to the same source, and condemning them together, are acting unfairly, dishonourably, and dishonestly by Revelation.

Having passed over the leading object held in view by the present Lecture, I shall venture to add some reflections to the point announced for discussion, of considerable importance to us, before these preliminary observations are closed; and which, if not considered now, can scarcely find any place in the plan which I have submitted to your attention. At the opening of this discourse I promised, as your time would allow, to offer,

II. Some remarks on the distance between the prophecy and the events predicted, in most instances. The intention of these observations is simply to illustrate this plain and important position, that the prophecies were delivered before the events which they profess to predict; and at the time which they assert.

1. The prophecies were written before the events which they profess to predict. In order to determine this point, it will be necessary to produce a few instances, as a short specimen; and we shall gather them from pages of the sacred writings, which are not likely to form any part of our future consideration. We shall also prefer a few, short, unnoticed prophecies, which will better answer our purpose, as we have little time to spare to them; and which, as they relate to comparatively small circumstances, we may presume would have escaped the minute attention of any future historian, had not the event been an extraordinary counterpart of the prediction. But if it can be proved that in subordinate and local predictions the event has precisely corresponded with the prophecy, we may hope the more readily to obtain your assent to those, which are more copious, more notorious, more confirmed, and which will hereafter be produced, for your investigation, in their respective order.

The destruction of the altar of Bethel was predicted in the year before Christ, nine hundred and seventy-five. "And behold, there came a man of God out of Judah, by the word of the Lord, unto Bethel: and Jeroboam stood by the altar to burn incense. And he cried against the altar in the word of the Lord, and said, O altar, altar, thus saith the Lord, Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name, and upon thee shall he offer the



priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and men's bones shall be burned upon thee."\* An immediate sign was superadded, in the withering of Jeroboam's arm, and in the rending of the altar: and the accomplishment of this prediction was in the year before Christ six hundred and twenty-four: and the interval between the prophecy and its fulfilment was three hundred and fifty-one years. Josephus makes three hundred and sixty-one years intervene.† This difference is trifling; but the whole lapse of time is considerable. "Moreover, the altar that was at Bethel, and the high place which Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, had made, both that altar and the high place he broke down, and burned the high place, and stamped it small to powder, and burned the grove. And as Josiah turned himself, he spied the sepulchres that were there in the mount, and sent and took the bones out of the sepulchres, and burned them upon the altar, and polluted it, according to the word of the Lord, which the man of God proclaimed."‡ Without entering into any discussion respecting the exactness of the chronology stated, it is sufficiently apparent, that the accomplishment of the prophecy was remote from the prediction itself; from the acknowledged distance between the reign of Jeroboam and the reign of Josiah.

At the fall of Jericho, doubtless under the impulse of a prophetic spirit, "Joshua adjured them, saying, Cursed be the man before the Lord, that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho: he shall lay the foundation thereof in his first born, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it."§ This sentence was pronounced in the year before Christ one thousand four hundred and fifty-one. We must look for the fulfilment of it, in the year before Christ nine hundred and eighteen. "In his days," that is, during the reign of Ahab, did Hiel the Bethelite build Jericho: he laid the foundation thereof in Abiram his first born, and set up the gates thereof in his youngest son, Segub, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by Joshua the son of Nun."|| Between the prophecy and the event, there is a space of five hundred and thirty-three years. These last passages in their connexion, will serve, moreover, to set in a clear point of view, the blessings and cursings pronounced by eminent characters, on certain occasions; and which have exposed them to the censures of superficial readers, as indicating a selfish, or a revengeful spirit. They had nothing to do with the one temper of mind or the other. They were solemn

\* 1 Kings xiii 1, 2.

† 2 Kings xxiii. 15, 16.

|| 1 Kings xvi. 34.

† Jos. Antiq. lib. x. cap. 5.

§ Josh. vi. 26.

predictions of that which would be. "The prophecy came not, in old time, by the will of man;" by either his favour or his resentment: "but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost;" and the event justified their censures and their commendations.

So clear and so decisive were the prophecies of Daniel, that Porphyry, who compared them with the Grecian histories extant in his time, unable to resist the fulness of evidence by which they were supported, said, that the predictions ascribed to this prophet were forgeries, and were written *after* the events which they professed to foretell. A fine concession is this, on the part of the correspondence between the prophecies and the event: while the assertion which he makes of the fraud, is as weak as it is false. Even Grotius, who is the coolest and the most candid opponent that infidelity could ask, seems to kindle here; and says, "it is the same as if any one should question whether the productions of Virgil were really written by him, and in the Augustan age: for there never was any more doubt among the Hebrews concerning the one, than there was among the Romans respecting the other."\*

The assertion of Porphyry, that the book of Daniel was forged after the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, is so far from being true, that "this prophecy was translated into Greek more than one hundred years before, and was in the hands, not only of the Jews, but of the Egyptians also, inveterate enemies to the whole Jewish nation."† We advance that,

2. The prophecies were written at the time in which they profess themselves to have been delivered. Without referring to chronology and to a comparison of farther predictions and histories, we ask of skepticism only those common concessions which are made on all similar occasions: that the testimony of contemporary writers, who could have no interest in supporting a fraud, but would have reaped great honour in detecting one, and the general consent of the Jewish nation, be admitted. These are deemed evidences in every other literary point—irresistible evidences—evidences—on which we receive as genuine all the writings of antiquity—and why should they be rejected on this subject, and on this subject only? If the same concessions were made to Revelation which are every day made to other productions: if the same allowances were granted to the sacred writers which are given unasked, and without reluctance, to other historians: if the same evi-

\* Grot. de Ver. Relig. Christ. lib. i. sect. 17.

† Bp. Watson's Theol. Tracts, vol. i. p. 361.

dences were admitted on the part of the Bible, which ought to be granted, and which are allowed in support of any other book; there would be no longer any controversy, the weapons of infidelity would be laid aside, and the Scriptures would be cordially received.

There was never any doubt on the part of the Jewish nation, at any age, of the times when their prophecies were written; nor any hesitation in the admission of the claims of those writings to the dates which they assume. The events of war, of captivity, and of other great concerns of their nation, served to fix and to distinguish the dates of their prophecies and histories. It has been judiciously and truly remarked, that three leading circumstances, collected from the internal evidence of the different prophets themselves, illustrate and confirm this observation. "First, that the authors who lived *after* the carrying away of the Jews into Babylon, make use of some *Chaldee* terms; which are not to be found in the *fore-going* prophets; for we may see in the books of Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, the same style with Ezra, Nehemiah, and Daniel. Secondly, the authors of these books give names to the months, which they had not before the captivity: for before that era, the Jews only gave the names of first, second, third, &c. to their months. Thirdly, the authors of these prophecies take particular notice of any newly instituted fasts; thus, we see that the prophet Haggai mentioned those fasts of which we have nothing in the law, but which were instituted during the captivity."\* Thus, the very style of the respective prophets, independently of external evidences, will, when accurately investigated, determine the periods in which they wrote.

There are many things in the prophecies, especially the calling of the Gentiles, which opposed Jewish prejudices, and thwarted them in those principles of which they were most tenacious: surely an impostor, or a band of impostors, who should sit down to forge oracles, would have adapted them better to the taste of their country. And why was imposition confined only to certain ages? Why did it not survive the year of the world three thousand five hundred and fifty-three? Why have there been no impostors, no successful pretensions to prophecy, since Malachi, among a people who for eight ages were celebrated for the splendour and accuracy of their predictions?† Let skepticism consider and answer these difficulties.

We proceed no farther upon this subject: but it may be asked, why we are so anxious to prove the truth of Scripture Prophecies;

\* Bp. Watson's Theol. Tracts, vol. i. p. 365.

† Bp. Watson's Theol. Tracts, vol. i. p. 370, 371.



and to what use they can be applied if we carry our point in establishing them? They will elucidate and place beyond the shadow of doubt some of the most important subjects that ever presented themselves to the human mind.

1. The Doctrine of Providence. There is not a doctrine more absurd in itself, or more pernicious to the interests of mankind, than the doctrine of chance. It is absurd to imagine that God should create the world, and abandon the government of it: that he should form beings wholly and entirely dependent upon himself, and then withdraw his support from them. It is pernicious to human morals, and to human society, to insinuate that God has no superintendence over the affairs of men, and that they have no responsibility to him. It is a degrading representation of the Deity to assert, that, supremely happy in himself, he disregards the felicity of his creatures; and that infinitely secure, he leaves them alone on the troubled deeps of life, tossed from wave to wave, the sport of adverse and of ungovernable winds. It is not true. He abandons not the little ark that contains the human race, as it floats upon a tempestuous sea. He did not launch yonder worlds with an omnipotent arm, till he had prescribed their orbits with infinite skill. The doctrine of divine superintendence stimulates exertion. A man labours with spirit proportionate to his expectation of success. If the issue be left to chance, he may well despair: but if it be in the hands of Providence, which will undoubtedly produce the end best adapted to his interests, he has an object before him of unspeakable moment, and he will pursue the use of the means with increasing vigour. Scripture Prophecy once established, is a decisive and resistless demonstration of the existence, the agency, and the wisdom of Divine Providence.

2. The Connexion of the Sacred Writings. Because they were composed at distinct periods, and by different persons, they are too often considered as disunited, and are read separately, and examined partially. It is most true, that they were the work of several ages: that there could not be any thing like collusion, or secret understanding, between writers who were removed centuries from each other: but it is also true that there is a harmony of all their parts, and a union which is as indissoluble as it is wonderful. Like a well constructed edifice, it is impossible to remove a single stone, without deranging the order, destroying the beauty, and affecting the stability of the whole. Prophecy and history alternately elucidate and confirm each other. Here I am convinced of the truth of the prophecy, by the history of its accomplishment; there I am satisfied that the leading features of the history are genuine, by

their correspondence with the prediction. I cannot doubt, on the one hand, that the prophecy was a Revelation of the omniscient God; nor on the other, that the event was under Divine Superintendence; when I discern the last to be the very image and reflection of the first. I am able to trace the unbroken line which runs through the entire volume: which not only unites the Old and the New Testaments, but also links all their several parts together. I trace them all to the same origin, and say—"God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son." I am unable to withhold my assent to the authority and the claims of such a volume, so harmonious and so supported.

3. A presumptive evidence in favour of Miracles is deducible from the establishment of Scripture Prophecy. If it can be clearly and satisfactorily proved, that prophecies delivered a considerable time before the events themselves took place, were actually and precisely accomplished, there will remain no objection against miracles which may not be applied to prophecy; and the removal of them in the one case, is the overthrow of them in the other, by a parity of reasoning. Is a miracle defined to be "an extraordinary operation, above the power of all created beings, and performable by God alone?" So is prophecy. Is it the result of Omniscience and of Omnipotence, in their combined influence? So is prophecy and its accomplishment. Is it impossible for a miracle to be wrought without the immediate interposition of Deity? It is equally impossible for a creature to foreknow or to predict future events; and to roll round the wheel of Providence, so as to cause those events precisely to correspond with the prediction. Is it more extraordinary for a man to open the eyes of the blind, or to heal the sick, or to raise the dead, than to foretell events, concealed in the womb of futurity, and contrary, in every respect, to the features of the times, and to the aspect of the world, at the moment when such predictions are pronounced? Here they undoubtedly occupy the same ground. Miracles and prophecy are alike above all human agency, alike depend upon the interposition of God; and if the one be proved, the other is more than credible. Prophecy is, then, a standing miracle. If God has, indeed, stepped out of his way, so to speak, to unveil the eyes of man, and to open them upon the secrets of futurity, what reasoning can be produced to prove that he has not communicated, for the same wise ends, to a creature, the power of producing operations above human ability, and contrary to the established and general laws of nature? In both cases those laws are alike suspended, or exceeded. Is it more

incredible that God should impart supernatural power, than that he should bestow supernatural light? I think not. And the confirmation of prophecy is of importance as it may assist a future inquiry into the evidence of miracles. Above all, the establishment of Scripture Prophecy, will be another evidence that this volume is inspired. And till the pretensions of Revelation are totally overthrown, is skepticism safe in treating them with derision? What, if they should be true!—Is it wise to demand a triumph before the battle is won? We shall pursue our inquiries into the claims of the Scriptures, without regarding the affectation of superiority assumed by those who reject them; just reminding them, in the mean time, of the reasonable advice of a king of Israel; “Let not him that girdeth on his armour, boast himself as he that putteth it off.”

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## NOTES.

### NOTES TO THE SECOND LECTURE.

ARCHBISHOP POTTER agrees with the observations of the preceding Lecture as to the source of oracles; at least, it is to be inferred that he is unwilling to consider them as mere chicanery, from the following observation. “As to the causes of oracles, it has been disputed whether they were the revelations of demons, or only the delusions of crafty priests. Van Dale has wrote a large treatise in defence of the *latter* opinion, but his arguments are *not of such force* but that they might *without difficulty be refuted*, if either my design required, or time permitted me to answer them.”

*Abp. Potter's Antiq. of Greece, vol. i. ch. vii. p. 263.*

The same author notices the necessity of propitiating the god by presents. “Whoever went to consult the oracle was required to make large presents to the god; whereby it came to pass, that this temple” (of Delphos) “in riches, splendour, and magnificence, was superior almost to all others in the world. And *Aphetorice opes*, (so called from *Αφροτος*, a name of Apollo, given him, as some say, from sending forth oracles,) have been proverbially used for abundance of wealth. Another thing required of those that desired answers was, that they should propound their questions in as few words as might be, as we are informed by Philostratus, in the life of Apollonius. It was the custom also, to *offer sacrifices* to Apollo, in which, except the omens were favourable, the prophetess would not give any answer. At these sacrifices there were five priests, saith Plutarch, named *Οσίοι*, i. e. *Holy*, that assisted the prophets, and performed many other offices with them, being supposed to be descended from Deucalion. There was one also who presided over these, called *Οσιωτής*, or *Purifier*; though Plutarch saith, that the sacrifice slain, when any of the *Οσίοι* were declared, was called by that name; unless, instead of *το θυσιμενον ιερεον*, or the sacrifice killed, we might be allowed to read *τον θυσιμενον ιερεον*, or the person killed the sacrifice. There was another priest also, that assisted the prophetess in managing the oracle, whom they called *Αφροτος*, upon the same account that Apollo was so named.”

*Abp. Potter's Antiq. of Greece, vol. i. c. 9, p. 279.*

That these presents were to be costly, and that, unlike the effects produced by the fidelity of Scripture Prophecy, oracles proved to those who were employed in delivering them a source of honour and emolument, is distinctly stated by this same writer, when he says, upon the authority of Strabo,—“My author goes yet



higher, and tells us, that inspired persons were thought worthy of the greatest honour and trusts; insomuch that sometimes we find them advanced to the throne, and invested with regal power, for that being admitted to the counsels of the gods, they were best able to provide for the safety and welfare of mankind. This reputation stood the priests (who had their dependence on the oracles) in no small stead; for finding their credit thus thoroughly established, they allowed no man to consult their gods, before he had offered costly sacrifices, and made rich presents to them; whereby it came to pass, that few beside great and wealthy men were admitted to ask their advice, the rest being unable to defray the charges required on that account; which contributed very much to raise the esteem of oracles among the common people; men generally being apt to admire the things they are kept at some distance from; and on the other hand to condemn what they are familiarly acquainted with. Wherefore, to keep up their esteem with the better sort, even they were only admitted upon a few stated days; at other times, neither the greatest prince could purchase, nor persons of the greatest quality any ways obtain an answer. Alexander himself was peremptorily denied by the Pythia, till she was by downright force compelled to ascend the Tripus, when finding herself unable to resist any longer, she cried out *Ανιπτος ει*, *Thou art invincible!* which words were thought a very lucky omen, and accepted instead of a farther oracle.”

*Abp. Potter's Antiq. of Greece, vol. i. c. 7, p. 263.*

There are not wanting instances in which the priestess proved less scrupulous than on this memorable occasion with Alexander; and when corruption was sufficiently notorious to justify what has been advanced in the preceding Lecture relative to the power of gold in obtaining and in dictating an answer, with all imaginable facility.

I will farther venture to intrude upon the reader some extracts corroborative of that which has been advanced respecting the distraction of the priestess. The same writer observes, on this subject, as well as upon the preparatory ceremonies —“The Pythia, before she ascended the Tripus, used to wash her whole body, especially her hair, in Castalis, a fountain at the foot of Parnassus, where the poets, men inspired by the same Deity, used to wash and drink. At her first sitting down upon the Tripus, she used to shake the laurel-tree that grew by it, and sometimes to eat the leaves. Herself also, and the Tripus, were crowned with garlands of the same plant, as we learn from the Scholiast upon Aristophanes, at this verse, where one asketh,

“Τί δὴθ' ὁ Φοῖβος ἔλαχεν ἐκ στεμμάτων;

What from the oracle with garlands trimm'd  
Has Phœbus utter'd?

“Nor did the Pythia only make use of laurel in this manner, but other prophets also, it being thought to conduce to inspiration; whence it was peculiarly called *μαντικὸν φυτόν*, *the prophetic plant*. The Pythia, being placed upon the Tripus, received the divine *afflatus* in her belly; whence she is called, *εγασσεμυθος*, or *σηνομαντις*. She was no sooner inspired, but she began immediately to swell, and foam at the mouth, tearing her hair, cutting her flesh, and in all her other behaviour appearing like one phrenetic and distracted. But she was not always affected in the same manner; for, if the spirit was in a kind and gentle humour, her rage was not very violent; but, if sullen and malignant, she was thrown into extreme fury; insomuch that Plutarch speaks of one enraged to such a degree, that she affrighted, not only those that consulted the oracle, but the priests themselves, who ran away and left her; and so violent was the paroxysm, that in a little time after she died. Some say, that under the Tripus sometimes appeared a *Dragon* that returned answers, and that the Pythia was once killed by him. And Eusebius reports, *δράκοντα εἰλεῖσθαι περὶ τὸν τρίποδα*, *that a serpent rolled himself about the tripod.*”

*Abp. Potter's Antiq. of Greece, vol. i. c. 9, p. 278.*

It is impossible to read this account of the convulsive agonies of the priestess of Apollo, without being reminded of those violent and distressing symptoms of demoniacal possession, in the days of our Lord, recorded by the different Evangelists, especially Matt. viii. 28, &c. Mark v. 2—5. ix. 18, 19, 26.

The testimony of Virgil confirms all that has been advanced respecting the

distraction of the priestess, when he thus describes the Sibyl at the moment when Æneas consulted the oracle :

“Cui talia fanti,  
Ante fores, subito non vultus, non color, unus,  
Non comtæ mansere comæ; sed pectus anhelum?  
Et rabie fera corda tument; majorque videri,  
Nec mortale sonans; adflata est numine quando  
Jam propiore dei.”

*Virg. Æneid. lib. vi. v. 46—51. tom. II. p. 65. Wakefield's edit.*

The contrast between the phrensy of diviners and the calm dignity of the prophets, has been distinctly marked by Chrysostom, whose testimony has been quoted by John Smith in his discourse on prophecy already referred to; after many opinions selected from the Fathers, he says, “I shall add but one author more, and that is Chrysostom, who hath very fully and excellently laid down this difference between the true and false prophets. Hom. 29, on the first epistle to the Corinthians: Τὸ τοῦ μάντεως ἴδιον, τὸ ἐξεσηκνᾶναι, τὸ ἀνάγκη ὑπομένειν, τὸ ὀθεῖσθαι, τὸ ἔλκεσθαι ὥσπερ καινόμενον. *It is the property of a diviner to be ecstasical, to undergo some violence, to be tossed and hurried about like a madman.* Ὁ δὲ προφητῆς εὐχεται, ἀλλὰ μετὰ διανοίας νηφους, καὶ σωφρονεως καλῶσεως, καὶ εἰδὼς ὃ φέγγεται φησιν ἀπαντα, *But it is otherwise with a prophet, whose understanding is awake, and his mind in a sober and orderly temper, and he knows every thing that he saith.*”

*Bp. Watson's Theolog. Tracts, vol. iv. p. 315.*

I have purposely refrained from making extracts from Rollin, in the hope that some young persons may be induced to consult for themselves his instructive and entertaining ancient history. The style and constant quotations of Abp. Potter's\* being less attractive, I have selected what appears to me most important relative to the preceding Lecture, from the mass of heavy literature and valuable information thrown together in his volumes. Those who are curious to be more particularly acquainted with the celebrated cave of Trophonius may find a long account of it extracted from Pausanias and Plutarch by Abp. Potter, in his Antiquities of Greece, volume the first, chapter the tenth, from the 290th to the 293d page inclusive. Their narratives are too long to be admitted into this note, and are the less necessary because of the minute description given of it in the preceding Lecture, together with an extract relative to the most important particulars, from the testimony of Pausanias, by the Archbishop.

Where so much of imposture was manifest, (whatever other influence might at times be exerted,) we cannot wonder that among men of understanding and literature, oracles should, at length, sink into disrepute. Both the Platonists and Stoicks treated them with neglect bordering upon contempt. I will only adduce one extract from Smith's discourse on prophecy, cited in the former Lecture, and preserved in Bp. Watson's Theological Tracts. After some remarks on the opinions of the Platonists, relative to this subject, he adds—“Likewise the Stoicks will scarce allow their wise men at any time to consult an oracle, as we may learn from Arrian, lib. ii. c. 7, and Epictetus, c. 39, and Simplicius' comment thereupon; where that great philosopher, making a scrupulous search what those things were which it might be fit to consult the oracle about, at last brings them into so narrow a compass, that a wise man shall never find occasion to honour the oracle with his presence. A famous instance whereof we have in Lucan, lib. ix. where Cato, being advised to consult Jupiter Hammon's Oracle after Pompey's death, answers,

“Estne Dei sedes nisi terra, et pontus, et aër  
Et cælum et virtus? Superos quid quærimus ultra?  
Jupiter est quodcunque vides, quocunque moveris.  
Sortilegis egeant dubii semperque futuris  
Casibus ancipites; me non oracula certum,  
Sed mors certa facit——”

*Bp. Watson's Theolog. Tracts, vol. iv. p. 313.*

\* The same remark will apply with equal force to Smith's Discourse on Prophecy.

## LECTURE III.

## THE PROPHECY RELATING TO THE ARABS.

## GEN. XVI. 11, 12.

And the angel of the Lord said unto her, Behold thou art with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael: because the Lord hath heard thy affliction. And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man; and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren.

IMAGINE to yourselves a number of men with minds divested of prejudice, opening the sacred volume, to read it with care and with attention. Such is its variety, and such its beauty, that it will interest each of them in his own peculiar way: but to some it will appear infinitely more important than to others. The SCHOLAR will find in it some of the most sublime specimens of eastern composition. The ANTIQUARIAN will prize precious fragments, snatched from the destroying hand of time, rescued from barbarous pillage, surviving the ruins of empires, and transmitted to the present age, while a thousand other works of later date have been consigned to oblivion. The POET will meet here, bold and striking images, vivid and impressive figures of speech, lofty and magnificent descriptions, which he may look for in vain among the first of the Greek and Roman classics. Here the SPECULATIST may discern the most curious and sublime truths brought down to the standard of the plainest understanding; a system elevated beyond the utmost stretch of human comprehension, finding its way to the human heart: mysterious and unsearchable points rendered familiar and intelligible: a wide and inviting field opened for the exertion of every mental faculty. The MAN OF TASTE AND OF FEELING, will be gratified by the exhibition which is made of manly eloquence, of exquisite sensibility, of unaffected sentiment, of true refinement. The LOVER OF HISTORY will discover authentic records of the most remote and the most interesting events, written with a noble sim-



plicity, and possessing the utmost perspicuity. Departed generations are recalled and return, with their manners and customs. The lives and characters of the great and the good are drawn with fidelity and with impartiality. Sometimes he will be presented with the *biography of individuals*. He will see a great mind encountering a variety of circumstances, struggling with adversity, or withstanding the more dangerous insinuations of prosperity. In every scene he will be able to pierce his very bosom; and in life or in death, the recesses of his heart are alike laid open. Every sphere of human life is accessible; and the Prince, the Lawgiver, and the Shepherd, present themselves in their turn. Sometimes he will be surrounded by *domestic scenes*; and will sit down in the bosom of a family. He will witness their divisions and their reconciliations, their failings and their excellencies, their joys and their sufferings—in a word, he will become one of them. Sometimes the concerns of a *nation* will burst upon his imagination. He will be made acquainted with the sources of dominion, the windings of power, and the hidden springs of national decay. Thus also the STATESMAN will be interested. He may learn many a lesson of wisdom, and draw many a wholesome truth, from these pages. The best and wisest legislators have made the code of laws, relating both to government and morality, contained in this volume, the standard by which their own constitution has been framed: nor have they deviated from this model without manifest disadvantage; except, indeed, the unavoidable changes of customs and of manners, and the dissimilarity of countries and of climes, have required alterations. To the PHILOSOPHER the secret springs of the human heart will be laid open. An acquaintance with men and things, beyond the sphere of human investigation, is displayed here. The movements of the mind, the influence of the passions, every rude and every tender emotion, is uncovered before him, and submitted to his penetration. THOSE THAT ADMIRE THE MARVELLOUS may also have their taste gratified, and that not at the expense of truth. Unparalleled wonders are narrated. They bear no marks of fiction: but they carry irresistible features of veracity. They are related with simplicity, and are confirmed abundantly by internal, and by external evidences. We are producing in their order some of the singular events which abound here. There are both miracles and prophecies; and, to impress the heart the more, the reader is *himself* interested in them. It will be seen, both in the discussion of this evening, and in some future exercises, that some of the prophecies, which are to pass before you, continue in force to the present hour, and have, therefore, the advantage of evidences still existing.

But what are the emotions with which the different characters, whom we have enumerated, will consult this volume, to the feelings with which THE CHRISTIAN will read it? Their taste is gratified; but his wants are supplied. Their imagination is fired, and their judgment is informed; but his heart is warmed, and his mind is relieved. To them the throne of God may be a seat of terror; to him it is a "throne of grace." A mind at ease seeks entertainment; a wounded spirit pants for repose. The one may consult this volume from curiosity, or, at best, for instruction; the other will read it for his life—his present peace, and his future happiness, alike depend upon what he finds here. It is with the feelings, the views, and the advantage of this last character, that we earnestly desire you should examine the Scriptures.

In a plan which professedly aims at selection, we must of necessity pass over many predictions worthy attention, merely because they will not accord with our design; and produce only those which are most prominent, and which will best elucidate that evidence in favour of Revelation which arises out of prophecy. Among these, it is impossible not to recollect the language of Noah respecting his youngest son; whose posterity in every age have felt the operation of the sentence passed upon their father; and their circumstances have decidedly proved that the curse pronounced by the patriarch against Ham, was no ebullition of momentary rage, but the clear and calm annunciation of a prophetic spirit. Not to name the Canaanites, the Egyptians, the Tyrians, and the Carthaginians, the descendants of Ham, who yielded in succession to the Israelites, the Persians, the Grecians, and the Romans, the posterity of his brethren—the malediction has not yet ceased to pursue them. The Continent of Africa was peopled by the children of Ham, and it continues the mart of slavery to the whole world. I may speak with the greater freedom on this point, as my own country has rolled the reproach from her bosom. Does any one ask a present evidence of the truth and the accomplishment of Scripture Prophecy? Let him examine the twenty-fifth verse of the ninth chapter of the book of Genesis and there he will read "Cursed be Canaan;\* a servant of servants shall he be to his brethren." Let him then turn his eyes upon yonder African, who is a sad witness to its truth, at the close of four thousand one hundred and fifty-four years from the period when this prediction was delivered. Snatched from his country, separated from his wife

\* For the substitution of Canaan for Ham, see note 1, at the end of this Lecture.

and his children, compressed into a space almost too narrow for the springs of existence to play as he crosses the waves that waft him for ever from every object that communicated a pulse of joy to his heart, he is dragged to a foreign market, as a beast of burden, and sold to suffer and to sustain all the horrors of slavery. In vain he turns his eyes and stretches his hands towards the shores of his native land which have disappeared; in vain he calls upon his family, or implores pity from his taskmasters; the winds scatter his lamentations, and the insensible ocean drinks his tears. While he labours under the scorching noon, or is chilled by the damps of the night, nothing is left to alleviate the bitterness of captivity. He has no wife whose affectionate bosom would prove a pillow to his throbbing head; no child to lisp his name; no parent to wipe the tear half-suppressed from his swollen eyes. The scourge is the recompense of his toil; and the blood streaming down his sides, ploughed by the hand of violence, is the wages of his hard bondage. Hope, that lightens anguish, that sweetens care, that heals the wounds of the heart, the only remaining consolation of the miserable, and that assists even the prisoner to carry his fetters—Hope has stretched her wings and fled from the fields nourished by human blood, the blood of Africa's enslaved sons. He casts many a gloomy look to the close of that life, which is to him trouble and anguish. He has not even the consolation of reflecting that he shall lay his head upon the turf that hides his ancestors, and repose by the side of his parents: an idea precious to nature in her wildest, darkest, most uncultivated state; and which civilized nations have never consented to relinquish. He winds up all his mental powers against the weakness of complaint; he sheds no tears but in secret; and despair breaks his heart. Nature has taught him that in the grave "the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest"—and he anticipates death as the only friend which oppression has left him. And who are his tyrants? The descendants of Shem and of Japheth,—polished Europe. By what principles of justice is Europe the scourge of Africa? By what right is the liberty of that man infringed and destroyed? We claim a right to the air which we breathe; and to the general, unrestricted bounties of nature; and he has with us this common right. Britain concentrates all her forces, and awakens her energies along all her shores—her sons are willing to die for the cause of freedom; and this queen of the nations has set a noble example to every other empire, in breaking her yoke from the neck of Africa. Ah, let it not be said, he has no feeling—Look upon his countenance, is it not furrowed by tears springing from a sense of sorrow and of injury? His heart once beat with paternal transport. The hut was



precious to him which sheltered his children. He wept with his family when they wept, and rejoiced when they rejoiced. What is there in the Continent scorched by the sun's vertical rays that should so essentially alter Man? Pierce that arm—you will find blood circulating through its veins and arteries, like your own. His limbs are as pliant, and his heart as warm. Do not call him a barbarian. Deprived of all his rights, with all his consolations destroyed before his eyes, are we to wonder that mere nature should be sullen and revengeful? Are not those the savages who would not have pity, when they saw the tears of their brother? and who have reduced him to the situation, which excites his fury, and fires his malice? But Europe has another title—She is Christian Europe; and from what part of the mild and just precepts of the Redeemer, can she draw a sanction for oppression? Well may the wretched slave say—

Is there, as you sometimes tell us,  
Is there One who reigns on high?  
Did he bid you buy and sell us,  
Speaking from his throne, the sky?

Ask him, if your knotted scourges  
Matches, blood-extorting screws,  
Are the means which duty urges  
Agents of his will to use?

Hark! he answers—Wild tornadoes,  
Strewing yonder sea with wrecks,  
Wasting towns, plantations, meadows,  
Are the voice with which he speaks!

He foreseeing what vexations  
Afric's sons would undergo,  
Fix'd their tyrants' habitations,  
Where his whirlwinds answer—no!

I shall be pardoned for having dwelt so long upon a subject so interesting: and leaving the farther discussion of Noah's predictions, which precede the subject of this evening, I shall lead you immediately to our present object,

#### THE PROPHECY CONCERNING THE ARABS. .

It is comprehended in the language of the angel to Hagar, previous to the birth of Ishmael, the ancestor of the principal part of the Arabs; and before we review it, it is only necessary to observe, that whatever is predicted of good or evil respecting any particular person, is generally intended of his posterity. "And the angel of the Lord said unto her, Behold, thou art with child, and shalt bear a son,

and shalt call his name Ishmael;\* because the Lord hath heard thy afflictions. And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand will be against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren." There is yet one other passage which will supply a few additional circumstances to this prediction. It is the answer of God to the prayer of Abraham: "O that Ishmael might live before thee!" It is distinctly asserted that the patriarch should assuredly have a son by Sarah, whose name should be Isaac; and that with him and with his posterity the grand and peculiar covenant should be established: but it is added—"As for Ishmael, I have heard thee; behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly: twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation."† In these combined predictions one great and leading circumstance is clearly foretold,

#### HIS WILD INDEPENDENCE:

Every thing else is collateral and subordinate. Our leading object therefore should be, to exhibit how far this great character has been, and is maintained among the Arabs, his descendants, in past ages, and at the present moment. We shall attempt,

I. A general review of the language employed in the prediction.

The first prediction respects his **MULTITUDE**. "I will multiply him exceedingly."—"I will make him a great nation." This declaration was singularly fulfilled in the rapid increase of Ishmael's immediate descendants. Isaac, the child of promise, with whom God connected the covenant of redemption, and in whom the merciful designs of God towards guilty man centred, had only two sons—Jacob and Esau. The last of these was rejected; and the line in which the Messiah was to appear confined itself to the younger. One hundred and sixty-nine years after the period of the delivery of this prophecy, the sons of Jacob amounted to *twelve*; while the children of Ishmael were so considerably increased as to form a trading nation. At the moment when the eleven patriarchs were plotting the destruction of their brother Joseph, "behold a company of Ishmaelites came from Gilead, with their camels bearing spicery, and balm, and myrrh, going to carry it down into Egypt."

The second thing specified is that he should beget "**TWELVE PRINCES**." Accordingly, we find, that when Moses enumerates

\* *God shall hear.*

† Gen. xvii. 18—20.

the immediate descendants of Ishmael by name, he concludes his account with these words: "These are the sons of Ishmael, and these are their names, by their towns, and by their castles; *twelve princes*, according to their nations." The historians who have written on the customs of the Arabs, inform us that the posterity of Ishmael is still divided into tribes, at the head of every one of which is a ruler, called a Phylarch: and such, no doubt, were the "princes" of Moses.

The third point in the prophecy is his CHARACTER: "he will be a wild man." The original reads literally "a wild ass man:" for the very word\* applied to Ishmael in this prophecy is applied to that animal in other parts of the Scriptures. The image is extremely beautiful. The principal qualities of the wild ass are, savage independence, prodigious swiftness, a disposition to form themselves into troops, and a habitation in the wilderness. All these strongly characterize the Arabs. The description of the wild ass in the book of Job, will be present to the recollection of every one who has read, and learned to admire, the Bible. "Who hath sent out the wild ass free? or who hath loosed the bands of the wild ass? Whose house I have made the wilderness, and the barren lands his dwelling. He scorneth the multitude of the city, neither regardeth he the crying of the driver. The range of the mountains is his pasture, and he searcheth after every green thing."† With respect to himself, the dawn of prophetic veracity began to appear from his very birth, and more especially as he ripened into manhood. His mother was driven into a desert by the desire of her mistress: there he had received his early impressions, and there "he grew." He was a stranger to his father's house; and was early inured to hardships. His mind acquired fierceness from solitude, as his body grew robust. In respect to his posterity, it is equally just. The same ferocious independence stamps their character. They have no settled rest. The tent which covers them during the shadow of night, is struck in the morning; and they occupy the range of the desert. Civilization has never imprinted her foot upon their barren sand; and Time himself has failed to alter the shades of their general outline. Ishmael was an archer; and bows and arrows are their proper instruments of war, in the use of which they have ever been distinguished for dexterity and execution.

\* פרא. See Taylor's Heb. Concord. Also Bp. Newton on the Prophecies, vol. i. p. 23. Bochart translates it, "as wild as a wild ass"—*tam ferus quam amager*.

† Job xxxix. 5—8.



When it said, "his hand shall be against every man, and every man's hand against him"—the prediction concerns more immediately his descendants. But in respect of individuals, or nations, if the first member of the sentence be true, the last is inevitable. Society is held together by mutual obligations. Man is drawn to man by a conviction of the advantages of co-operation. All unions have their proper and respective duties, obligations, and responsibilities. We are able to lighten each others' burdens by mutual assistance; and aid commands affection. By his attention to me, by his care over me, by his anxious concern for me, I distinguish my parent, my brother, my friend, my neighbour. Dissolve these bonds, and society is destroyed. Renounce the connexions which nature or social order have formed, and you are necessarily renounced in return. He who feels not, and who cares not, for another, stands isolated in the very centre of society, is a hermit in the midst of the crowded city, and deserves to be considered as a barbarian, although encircled by all the advantages of civilization. It is human nature, it is the ordination of God; he whose "hand is against every man's," shall have "every man's hand against him." As this is the leading feature of the prophecy; let us see how it corresponds with the Arabs,

## II. In the former periods of their history.

It would be easy to produce the names and authority of a long list of historians, whose descriptions of the manners and of the circumstances of the Arabs in successive ages, abundantly confirm the features of this prediction, while they had no such intentions. We might also appeal to heathen writers, who had never read, nor probably ever heard this prophecy even by tradition, yet whose narratives represent them in past periods what they are to this hour, fiercely independent. But without multiplying testimonies of this description, we shall present you with facts respecting them as they arose, gathered from the united evidence of different writers, who, however they may be at variance on other points, are agreed on this subject. They have resisted successfully, in every age, the armies that have invaded them; and their necks have not been galled by the yoke of submission. When Diodorus Siculus describes the glory of Sesostris, the most renowned monarch that ever swayed the sceptre of Egypt, and the extent of his conquests, he is compelled to make a concession favourable to our subject, and to acknowledge that the Arabs were formidable even to him. So far from crouching before his arms, which when directed to every other quarter had been deemed resistless, the man who had, in the

pride of his power, yoked kings to his chariot literally as beasts of burden whenever he entered the city or the temple,\* was compelled to build a wall along the coast of Egypt from Heliopolis to Pelusium, to guard himself against his impetuous neighbours the Arabs and the Syrians.† The Assyrians, the Medes, and the Persians found them alike invincible. They were generally on friendly terms with them: but were frequently obliged to obtain by courtesy that which they could not have hoped from force. Cambyses, when he turned his arms against Egypt, was first compelled to ask permission of the Arabs to pass through their dominions: and Cyrus, the glorious deliverer of the Jews, the hero who subdued Babylon, could never impose conditions upon this free and independent people.‡ Alexander, whom men have consented to call the Great, and whose ambition was so insatiable, that when he had subdued the known globe, he is said to have wept that he had not other worlds to conquer—never stretched his powerful sceptre over these wandering tribes of the desert. When other nations sent embassies of submission, and the highest ambition of the barbarous and of the civilized, was alike to sit under the shadow of his protection, the descendants of Ishmael disdained to court his favour, or to conciliate his affection. They rejected his friendship, and despised his menaces. He was mortified at their indifference, and determined to chastise their presumption. He raised a prodigious force by sea and by land; and made such preparations as upon all human calculation might defy calamity. The veracity of prophecy, and the existence of this people on the one side, seemed to be balanced over against the renown and the power of Alexander. Another hand interposed—and an invincible arm arrested the enraged conqueror. In the very midst of his purposes, Alexander was cut off, and the Arabs delivered: for he died in the flower of his age, and before his plan of operation could be put into practice. After this snare was broken, nothing was attempted against their liberties, till Antigonus waged unsuccessful war with them. After several attacks he left them in their original state of wild freedom; and was so far from having subjected them in any degree, that they chased his soldiers from their dominions, and would not allow them to ga-

\* Diod. Sic. lib. i. p. 53. Laurentii Rhodmani, edit. 1604. See note 2, at the end of the Lecture.

† Ετείχισε δὲ καὶ τὴν πρὸς ἀνατολὰς νεύσαν πλευρὰν τῆς Αἰγύπτου πρὸς τὰς ἀπὸ τῆς Συρίας καὶ τῆς Ἀραβίας, ἀπὸ Πηγασίης μέχρις Ἡλιουπόλεως, διὰ τῆς ἔρημου, τὸ μῆκος ἐπὶ σαδίας χιλίας καὶ πεντακοσίων.

Diod. Sic. lib. i. p. 52.

‡ Herod. lib. iii. Diod. Sic. lib. ii. p. 131. See note 3, at the end.

ther bitumen from the lake Asphaltites. In the changes effected by time, the sceptre of the world passed into the hands of Rome:—but while she imposed fetters upon all other nations, the Arabs remained free. Efforts were made by several illustrious generals, at different periods of the Roman power, to reduce this stubborn track of country to a Roman province: but they all failed. Partial success attended the exertions of Pompey in the time of the Republic, and of Ælius Gallus in the reign of Augustus; a few tribes were subdued, and an inconsiderable impression made upon the country; but neither was their conquest complete, nor their assault general, nor the track which was occupied by their arms extensive, nor their influence permanent. The same may be said of the succeeding attacks of the emperors Trajan and Severus: flattery ascribed much more of prosperity to their arms than truth will allow: and a most respectable and accurate work of history,\* after the closest and most extensive researches, says of Trajan, to whom the greatest measure of success has been allowed, “that he never was master of Arabia Petræa, much less of Arabia Felix, notwithstanding the mean adulation of his coins, orators, and historians.” The naked fact is this—the Roman eagle which spread her resistless pinions over all countries, and which neither the storms of the north could terrify, nor the supposed barriers of the world confine, found no rest for the sole of the foot on the barren sands of Arabia, and returned unsuccessful from the pursuit of the rough sons of Ishmael. The fall of Rome conducts us to a period which we may call comparatively modern; and we have few accounts relating to this singular people, of moment, till we find the balance of power, in that quarter of the world, in the hands of the Turks. Let your attention be now directed to,

### III. The fulfilment of this prediction in the present situation of the Arabs.

So far from acknowledging the power of the Turks, this people are themselves compelled to pay a stipulated sum, a sort of annual tribute, to these fierce wanderers, as a security to the pilgrims who cross their wilderness to Mecca, whom, after all, they frequently plunder, and violate their treaty with impunity.

Their habits of life, for the most part, continue what they were from the beginning. They still dwell in tents—still live upon the milk and the flesh of their camels, still are gathered into tribes, still roam over the desert, shifting their habitations as necessity, or

\* Anc. Univ. Hist. vol. xviii. b. iv. p. 300. Dublin edit. 1746.



pleasure, or convenience may dictate. There have been many attempts to account for the independence and the habits of the Arabs from their situation: but this can never be deemed an objection to the fulfilment of the prediction. How is it that they have never altered their situation, and never changed their habits? Other nations have not continued what they were from the first. They have commenced in the savageness of uncultivated nature, and have gradually emerged into the polish of civilization. They have become changed till not a trace of their forefathers remained among them. Excess of refinement has melted into weakness, and superinduced their ruin. They have perished; and other empires have risen from their ashes. Thus was it with Rome herself—and such has been the general track of time. But he who reads the description upon which this lecture is founded, is reading the life of Ishmael, is reading the history of his immediate descendants, is reading the record of the Arabs in all ages, is reading the representation of what they are to this day, to this hour. At the close of thirty-seven centuries, they are unchanged in their habits, in their character, in their independence, and in their habitation.

That their character is unchanged, and that it continues to correspond with the description given of their ancestor, “his hand shall be against every man, and every man’s hand against him,” is the testimony of every modern writer, whose lot it has been to traverse these wide and barren wilds. Travellers are compelled to cross the desert in large and strong companies, called caravans, and even then scarcely ever escape being plundered. An Arab esteems plunder as his right, and considers depredation as his occupation. He never thinks of saying, “I robbed”—but “I gained.” He is even said to justify his conduct on the ground of Sarah’s cruelty to the mother of Ishmael, whose descendant he well knows he is; and thus age after age, supports the patrimony transmitted to him, satisfied with the lot of his father. Yet are they faithful to each other; and the property which they have among themselves is sacred.\* In order to pass unmolested through the desert, modern travellers have found that it is necessary to obtain as a guide, one of the Arabs of that, which then happens to be the ruling tribe; and in his protection is security both for property and for life.

I have already adverted to their continued independence; and it is supported by most respectable authority. A writer in high repute, and whose testimony almost every treatise on prophecy, and

\* Sale’s Prelim. Disc. to the Koran, vol. i. p. 40. Univ. Hist. vol. xviii. book iv. p. 258, 259. Newton on the Proph. vol. i. p. 24.

every modern history of the Arabs, has copied, says, "The Kings of Yemen, as well as the princes of Mecca and Medina, are absolutely independent, and not at all subject to the Turk, as some late authors have imagined. These princes often making cruel wars among themselves, gave an opportunity to Selim I. and his son Soliman, to make themselves masters of the coasts of Arabia on the Red Sea, and of part of Yemen, by means of a fleet built at Sues: but their successors have not been able to maintain their conquests; for except the port of Jodda, where they have a Basha whose authority is very small, they possess nothing considerable in Arabia."\* It is pleasant to trace the accomplishment of prophecy, relative to the continued independence and disposition of this people, in the accounts transmitted to us through the medium of the public journals of the day, respecting the support of the little English army lately in Egypt; who, cut off for a time from the resources of their country, received their supplies from the Bedoween Arabs, by whom they were succoured in defiance of the enmity, or the power, of either the French or the Turks; and, perhaps, whose principal reason for assisting us at that moment was, that in that quarter, our hand, like their own, was against every man's, and every man's hand against us.

The voice of ancient and of modern history is, therefore, on the side of that prediction, which we have read you this night respecting Ishmael, and which has been verified in every successive age, from his days to this hour, in his descendants. This accumulation of evidence, however, has not deterred an historian† of no uncommon rank and reputation, from attempting to bring the alleged accomplishment of their prophecy into discredit. It is to be lamented, especially for the rising generation, that infidelity should roll her dark tide along the largest and most respectable channels of information, opened to them either in history or in general literature. It is an increase of the evil, when the poison is mingled with whatever can render the potion palatable and pleasant: when doubts are urged with apparent diffidence, and are stated with apparent candour: when the conclusion is concealed till the reader becomes fascinated by the steps which lead to it; and when skepticism is recommended by whatever can dazzle the judgment, charm the imagination, and please the ear, in eloquence, in taste,

\* Sale's Prelim. Disc. to the Koran, vol. i. p. 87. In addition to the writers of the *Anc. Univ. Hist.* and *Newton on the Prophecies*, and the writer quoted above, the present state of the Arabs may be accurately gathered from the travels of *Shaw*, of *Pococke*, of *Bruce*, and a variety of others.

† Gibbon—in his *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*.

and in composition. The insinuating suspicion awakened by an historian, often produces more than the open attack of avowed skepticism. He has it in his power to touch some subjects so lightly and to colour others so deeply: to pass over almost unnoticed a strong circumstance that makes against his system, and to press into an imposing point of view every event, trifling in itself, which can appear, or be made to appear, to sanction it, that the mind is seduced, not so much by a single remark, as by the general direction of the narrative. In thus noticing the writer in question, I feel that I am censuring one of the first works ever produced, by human industry and human skill; a work that stands unrivalled in beauty and in information, on the point of history, which it embraces: a work that has secured immortality for its author as an historian, so long as the English language can be read, and the fate of falling Rome excite pity. Yet this production, so important, so interesting, so well executed, possesses all the unamiable qualities which a friend to revealed truth must deplore, and which render it an extremely daring risk to put it into the hand of any person whose mind is not well established, and whose judgment is not sufficiently matured to distinguish sophistry from argument, to repel insinuations that are not established by evidence, and to reject assertion when it is directed against the sanctity of truth. It is the characteristic of this work, that under a professed candour, it reduces Christianity and all pretensions to Revelation to one and the same standard: that the New Testament and the Koran, are placed in the same light, and spoken of in much the same terms: and that both are so represented as to appear equally questionable. Yet from lips so unwilling, truth sometimes extorts a testimony; and, occasionally, at a moment when nothing was less intended. I trust these remarks will not be deemed unfounded, when I have produced only this solitary instance of his enmity to the evidences of Scriptural veracity, in the case of the Arabs; and, at the same time, the concession which he is compelled to make upon the truth of an historian, which is in itself a complete refutation of his own sentiments.

In the elegant *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*\* it is said—"The perpetual independence of the Arabs has been the theme of praise among strangers and natives; and the arts of controversy transform this singular event into a prophecy and a miracle, in favour of the posterity of Ishmael. Some exceptions, that can neither be dissembled nor eluded, render this mode

\* Vol. ix. p. 229, 230. Octavo edit. London, 1797.



of reasoning as indiscreet as it is superfluous: the kingdom of Yemen has been successively subdued by the Abyssinians, the Persians, the Sultans of Egypt, and the Turks: the holy cities of Mecca and Medina have repeatedly bowed under a Scythian tyrant; and the Roman province of Arabia embraced the peculiar wilderness in which Ishmael and his sons must have pitched their tent in the face of their brethren." What answer shall be given to this testimony, expressed in terms so unqualified, the force of which is levelled professedly against the prophecy in the first instance, and afterwards against the superintendence by which it is fulfilled? Shall I refer you once more to Diodorus Siculus, as an evidence that they were unconquered in ancient times? Or to the writers of the Ancient Universal History, and to the decided confirmation of the learned and accurate Sale, in his Preliminary Discourses to the Koran, whose language has been already quoted, to prove that as a body they remain unconquered, and that no considerable impression has been made, at any period, by any power, upon their country? No, I will only appeal to the authority of this same writer: who, with celerity and force which cannot but excite our astonishment, on the same page, without the intervention of a single sentence, destroys all his own objections, and refutes most ably his own system, when he adds, (words never to be forgotten,) "*Yet these exceptions are temporary or local; the body of the nation has escaped the yoke of the most powerful monarchies; the arms of Sesostris and Cyrus, of Pompey and Trajan, could never achieve the conquest of Arabia; the present sovereign of the Turks may exercise a shadow of jurisdiction, but his pride is reduced to solicit the friendship of a people, whom it is dangerous to provoke, and fruitless to attack.*"\* He goes on to develop the natural causes which produce and secure the independence of the Arabs: but it is with the fact alone that we have to do; and the fact that they are free, and have been ever so, is all that we require to establish the prophecy. In a note on the page in question, this writer farther acknowledges, that "the real possessions, and some naval inroads of Trajan, are *magnified* by history and medals into the Roman conquest of Arabia." No additional observation from any quarter can be necessary to meet his objections, for if the last assertions quoted are true, (and they are supported by all history, ancient and modern,) the first are nugatory; and thus the character of Ishmael stands unobliterated on the

\* Mr. Kett, in his publication on Prophecy, has ably exhibited this inconsistency of Gibbon. Kett on Prophecy, vol. 1. p. 63—68.

features of his descendants: "He will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren." It was impossible for any eye to have pierced the clouds of unveiled time; or for any uninspired tongue to have foretold the future destinies of this outcast child, and of his unborn descendants. But He, who collects into one point of view the past, the present, and the future, as scattered rays of light are sometimes combined in a common centre, uttered this clear and explicit prediction. Nor can it ever be affirmed that this was the language of ignorance presuming to anticipate the secrets of future years—it was the unchangeable decree of Him, whose power has since accomplished that, which his Sovereign will had predetermined, and which his oracles have expressly foretold. This is one of the cases in which we can appeal to existing circumstances, and call in the testimony of present evidences. The prophecy which has been continually fulfilling, is yet in complete force; and the veracity of it is still guarded, the accomplishment of it is still witnessed, by Him, "who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working." And we shall see greater things than these. Already we have seen the thrones of this world shake to their foundation: and yet has God revealed his designs but in part. Providence is preaching loud; and the heart of man has long failed him in expectation of "the things that are coming to pass." So much the more earnestly does it become us to cleave to a system which alone can be to us an overshadowing rock, when all the pavilions of worldly consolation are swept away by the whirlwind of calamity.

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## NOTES.

### NOTES TO THE THIRD LECTURE.

NOTE 1.—Respecting the substitution of *Canaan* for *Ham* in the prophetic malediction of Noah, various opinions have been held by different critics. The writers of the ancient Universal History say, "This curse, if it be a curse, being pronounced not against Ham, the immediate transgressor, hath occasioned various conjectures." They seem to lean to the opinion of Mr. Bayle, who "does not take this passage properly to contain a curse; and says, 'it is pretty strange, that the Scriptures take no notice of any thing being done by Noah to Ham'—he observes, that there is not one word of censure passed upon Ham; that the patriarch was content to curse Canaan the son of Ham; and that this curse was nothing else but a prophecy of the victories, which the descendants of Shem should obtain over the descendants of Canaan under Joshua, that is to say, seven or eight ages after the crime of Ham had been committed. (Bayle Dict. Hist. Art Cham.\*)" They add, "Some have believed that Noah cursed Canaan, because he could not well have

cursed Ham himself, whom God had not long before blessed." "Others, more reasonably," to encourage the Israelites. They conclude that "not all Ham's race were here accursed," but that "the malediction was confined to Canaan and his posterity." *Anc. Univ. Hist. vol. i. p. 352, et seq. Dublin edit. of 1745.*

Bishop Newton thus proposes to alter the text: "Hitherto we have explained the prophecy according to the present copies of our Bible: but if we were to correct the text, as we should any ancient classic author in a like case, the whole perhaps might be made easier and plainer. 'Ham the father of Canaan' is mentioned in the preceding part of the story; and how then came the person of a sudden to be changed into Canaan? The Arabic version in these verses hath the father of Canaan, instead of Canaan. Some copies of the Septuagint likewise have Ham instead of Canaan, as if Canaan was a corruption of the text. Vatablus and others by Canaan understand the father of Canaan, which was expressed twice before. And if we regard the metre, this line 'Cursed be Canaan,' is much shorter than the rest, as if something was deficient. May we not suppose therefore (without taking such liberties as Father Houbigant hath with the Hebrew text) that the Copyist by mistake wrote only Canaan, instead of Ham the father of Canaan?"

*Newton on Prophecy, vol. i. Dissert. i. p. 11 and 12.*

Among the invaluable labours of the Editor of Calmet, are to be found some interesting particulars relative to Ham, both in the volume of Fragments, and in the more recent publication of Scripture Illustrated. In the last of these works, he says, "As to the true reading of the passage, the name Canaan is not read in the Aldine edition of lxx. and in seven MSS. collated by Dr. Holmes, but Ham is made the subject of this curse. The Arabic version reads both names, 'Ham, the father of Canaan;' the Greek of Venice places the curse of Canaan separately. After all, I must own, I think the words 'the father of Canaan,' in the Arabic version, have very much the air of a note, received into the text by way of explanation. Add to which, the testimony of the Indian records, attributes the guilt, and directs the punishment, to Ham only."

*Scripture Illustrated, p. 23, on Gen. ix. ver. 20.*

In his volume of Fragments, he has given the Indian story of Ham, as translated by Sir W. Jones.

*ASIATIC RESEARCHES, vol. iii. p. 263.*

"1. To Satyavarman, that sovereign of the whole earth were born three sons: the eldest Sharma; then C'harma; and, *thirdly*, Jya'peti by name.

"2. They were all men of good morals, excellent in virtue and virtuous deeds; skilled in the use of weapons, to strike with, or to be thrown; brave men, eager for victory in battle.

"3. But Satyavarman being continually delighted with devout meditation, and seeing his sons fit for dominion, laid upon them the burden of government;

"4. While he remained honouring and satisfying the gods, and priests, and kine. One day by the act of destiny, the king having drunk mead,

"5. Became senseless, and lay asleep naked: then was he seen by C'harma, and by him were his two brothers called.

"6. To whom he said, What has now befallen? In what state is this our Sire?

"By those two was he hidden with clothes, and called to his senses again and again.

"7. Having recovered his intellect, and perfectly knowing what had passed,

"HE CURSED C'HARMA, saying,

"THOU SHALT BE THE SERVANT OF SERVANTS.

"8. And, since thou wast a laughter in their presence, from laughter shalt thou acquire a name.

"Then he gave to Sharma, the wide domain on the south of the snowy mountains,

"9. And to Jya'peti, he gave all on the north of the snowy mountains; but he (Satyavarman) by the power of religious contemplation, attained supreme bliss."

*Fragments to Calmet. Frag. xix. p. 36, 37.*

Lieutenant Wilford renders this passage of Indian history—"It was in consequence of his father's imprecation, that he became a slave to the slaves of his brothers."

*The same, p. 37, from Asiatic Res. vol. iii. p. 67.*



Dr. Geddes differs altogether from Bp. Newton and from the Editor of Calmet. He speaks of the argument deduced from the metre, under the contemptuous title of "the chimerical rules of Hebrew metre"—and uniting it with that drawn from the reading of the Arabic Version, adds, "neither of these authorities is sufficient to justify an alteration in the present text; in which there is no variety of lection either in the Sam. or Hebr. copies: and with which all the other ancient versions perfectly agree." He hazards a conjecture respecting the circumstance of the copies, named by Bp. Newton and others, reading Ham instead of Canaan, as it stands in our Bibles. "I have sometimes imagined that the reading  $\chi\alpha\mu$ , in the Aldine and other copies, may have risen from the abbreviation of  $\chi\alpha\nu\alpha\nu$ ; thus  $\chi\tilde{\alpha}\nu$  The  $\mu$  and  $\nu$  in many Greek MSS., are to be distinguished only by the length of the left leg, which in  $\mu$  is much shorter than in  $\nu$ , so that this latter actually more resembles our common  $\mu$  than it does the  $\nu$  itself of those days; and this mode of orthography is preserved throughout the Greek New Testament of the edition of Alcalá." Upon the whole he concludes, "that to express his indignation at so infamous conduct, he curses Ham in his progeny, and in *him* of his progeny who was, probably, most dear to him, as being his youngest son," &c.

*Dr. Geddes' Crit. Rem. in Gen. ix. p. 76, 77.*

This differs essentially from those impressions which I entertain, and which I have in the preceding Lecture endeavoured to inculcate, respecting the spirit under which prophetic annunciations of good or evil were made—for the "prophecy came not in old time by the *will* of man," by his partialities or by his prejudices.

The learned Mr. Bryant retains the reading of *Canaan*, as in our Bible, and argues well as to the object and purport of the prophecy. How far his conjecture is founded in reason, respecting an omission in the prophecy, you will judge for yourselves. It is manifestly *only* conjecture: but it is conjecture marked with that reverence for the sacred Writings in which Dr. Geddes is so notoriously deficient.

Mr. Bryant says—"It is mentioned that Ham the son of Noah, had been guilty of a great breach of duty, and want of reverence to his father: that when Noah awoke, and was sensible of what his younger son had done, 'He said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be to his brethren. And he said, Blessed be the Lord God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant.' It has seemed to many persons extraordinary, that as Ham was the person guilty, he should be passed over without any animadversion; and that the curse should devolve to Canaan, who does not seem to have been at all an accomplice. But it must be observed, that these words are not so much to be esteemed a curse vented out of resentment against Ham and Canaan, for what had been done, as a prophetic denunciation of disobedience in time to come, and of the evils in consequence of it: and even then not uttered for their sakes, but upon account of others of another family, who were to come after, and to be instructed by it. It is very common with the sacred historian, in the early accounts which he gives us, to specify, what immediately relates to the grand purpose in hand; and to omit every thing else, which is not connected with it. Many things alluded to were well known at the time he wrote: it was therefore sufficient to extract what was essential: and to give a sample for the whole. This may be observed in the 'History of Lamech,' of a 'conquest made by Jacob,' in the 'Fragment upon the Conquest of Heshbon;' and in other places. In the passage, I am speaking of, there is reason to think, that a great deal preceded what is here mentioned by Moses; and that we have only a part of the original prophecy. From the tenor of what remains, we may perhaps form some judgment of what is omitted. It is probable, that at this season the patriarch disclosed, what was to happen in after times, especially to the son, who had aggrieved him. There is, I think, an apparent chasm and failure: which may with great probability be filled up from what seems to be implied in this curse upon Canaan. It is very reasonable to suppose, that Noah told Ham of the future apostacy of his children: that the same want of reverence, which Ham had exhibited, would be visible in his posterity: That the second in descent from him should be the first 'rebel upon earth; and at the same time the first tyrant, who should usurp authority over his brethren;' That of the race of Cush should be a daring confederacy, who at the general dispersion should with-

stand the divine dispensation, and arrogate to themselves territories in direct opposition to the will of God: That a chosen people were to arise; and that there was for them a particular land ordained: but that Canaan and his sons, another branch of his family, should disregard the ordinance, and seize upon the land, which was destined for God's own portion. Then comes in the part to the purpose; 'Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren: and Blessed be the Lord God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant.' Of this nature I take to have been the original prophecy; and good reason may be given, why one part is omitted; and the other retained. The former part is omitted by the divine writer, as unnecessary to be related; being either mentioned or implied in the common course of history. On the other hand, the propriety of inserting, what is specified, is apparent. It was a prophecy, that related most intimately to the Israelites; who, when this history was promulgated, were upon their journey to Canaan, the land adjudged to them for an inheritance, but occupied by others. It was to inform them first, that the Canaanites had no right to the land which they possessed: that they had been guilty of an undue usurpation: and were under the curse of God for their determined and obstinate disobedience: therefore for that reason they could not prosper against the Israelites. That the Israelites were going to their hereditary demesnes: to a land originally designed for them by the Great Disposer of thrones and kingdoms: that the blessing, entailed upon the sons of Shem, particularly belonging to the children of Jacob, in whom the prophecy was to be completed, and to whom the Canaanite was to be subservient. The time, the place, every circumstance shows with what propriety this part of the prophecy is retained: and at the same time it is evident, that something had preceded, which is omitted by Moses, as unnecessary to be related."

*Bryant's Anc. Mythol. 4to edit. of 1807, vol. vi. p. 289—292, of Additional Remarks.*

I have quoted this passage so much at length, because, while it throws some light on the intention of the prophecy, it goes far to justify, also, the subsequent invasion of the Canaanites by the Israelites—discussed in the Lectures on Scripture Facts.

NOTE 2.—Testimony of Diod. Sic. to the pride of Sesostriis: ὁπότε δὲ πρὸς ἱερὸν ἡ πόλιν προσεῖναι μέλλοι, τῆς ἵππους ἀπὸ τῆ θεορίππουλόν ὑπεξεύγνυν ἀντὶ τῶν κατὰ τέταρτας τῆς τε βασιλῆως καὶ τῆς ἄλλης ηγεμόνας. &c.

*Diod. Sic. lib i. p. 53, fol. Rhodmani edit. 1604.*

NOTE 3.—Herodotus says that the Arabians were never reduced to servitude by the Persians, but were treated as friends; and their assistance was courted when Cambyses wished to attack Egypt; for he could not effect his purpose without their permission. Ἀραβῖοι δὲ ἔδωκα κατηκταν ἐπὶ δαλγυνη Περσῆσι, ἀλλὰ ξεῖνοι ἐγενοντο, παρεῖτες Καμβύση ἐπ' Αἰγυπτον ἀεκόων γὰρ Ἀραβίων, οὐκ ἀν' ἐσθ' ἀλλοίεν Περσῶν εἰς Αἰγυπτον. *Herod. lib. iii. p. 198. Edit. Gale.*—That they were unconquered by the successive masters of mankind is testified by Diodorus Siculus, when he says, ὅθ' οἱ Ἀσσύριοι τὸ παλαιόν, ὅθ' οἱ Μήδων καὶ Περσῶν ἐπὶ δὲ Μακεδόνων βασιλεῖς ἠδυνήθησαν αὐτῆς καταδωλῶσθαι, πολλὰς μὲν, καὶ μεγάλας δυνάμεις ἐπ' αὐτῆς ἀγαγόντες, ἔδεποτε δὲ τὰς ἐπιβολὰς συντελέσαντες. *Diod. Sic. lib. ii. p. 131. Rhodom. edit. 1604.*

The excessive length of the note respecting Canaan, prevents me from quoting farther from this historian: but that section of his second book relative to the inhabitants of Arabia, under the title Ναβαταῖοι, *Nabataei*, would amply repay any one who should consult the whole of it; as a most striking representation of the state of the ancient Arabs corresponding in every particular, and more especially in their independence, with the same people of the present time.

## LECTURE IV.

## THE PROPHECIES OF DYING JACOB.

## GEN. XLIX.

And Jacob called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days. Gather yourselves together, and hear, ye sons of Jacob; and hearken unto Israel, your father. Reuben, thou art my first born, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power; unstable as water, thou shalt not excel; because thou wentest up to thy father's bed; then defiledst thou it; he went up to my couch. Simeon and Levi are brethren; instruments of cruelty are in their habitations. O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united: for in their anger they slew a man, and in their self-will they digged down a wall. Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel; I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel. Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise: thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy fathers' children shall bow down before thee. Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up? The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be. Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes: His eyes shall be red with wine, and his teeth white with milk. Zebulun shall dwell at the haven of the sea; and he shall be for a haven of ships; and his border shall be unto Zidon. Issachar is a strong ass couching down between two burdens: And he saw that rest was good, and the land that it was pleasant; and bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant unto tribute. Dan shall judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel. Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse-heels, so that his rider shall fall backward. I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord! Gad, a troop shall overcome him; but he shall overcome at the last. Out of Asher his bread shall be fat, and he shall yield royal dainties. Naphtali is a hind let loose: he giveth goodly words. Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall: The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him: But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob; (from thence is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel :) Even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee; and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above,



blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts, and of the womb: The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of thy progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills: they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren. Benjamin shall raven as a wolf: in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil. All these are the twelve tribes of Israel: and this is it that their father spake unto them, and blessed them; every one according to his blessing he blessed them. And he charged them, and said unto them, I am to be gathered unto my people: bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite, in the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite, for a possession of a burying-place. There they buried Abraham, and Sarah his wife; there they buried Isaac, and Rebekah his wife; and there I buried Leah. The purchase of the field, and of the cave that is therein, was from the children of Heth.

And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people.

THE closing scenes of every man's life are awful and impressive. When we stand by the side of a dying bed, lessons which are feebly conceived, and wholly disregarded at another time, are taught to perfection, and force their way to the heart in defiance of human levity. Here we see the man resigning the several perfections which once elated him with pride, and laying down his boasted excellencies. Here the strong man is deprived of his strength, and the rich man is stripped of his riches. This is the end of all flesh. The attainments of the scholar, and the wisdom of the wise, cease with the breath departing from the nostrils. The career of glory terminates in the vale of mortality: its lustre is extinguished in the shadow of death: and the hero yields to a stronger arm than his own. Here the dreams of a youthful imagination are broken, and the delusive enchantments of life vanish. Here the great and the gay discover how worthless, and how inconsiderable is the sum total of earthly good; and a true estimate of the present transitory existence is given. "It is better to go into the house of mourning, than to go into the house of feasting:" because the one strengthens the deceptions of time, and the other dissolves them. Let your hearts be serious this night: for that most interesting and useful of all scenes is painted before you in solemn colours—the close of a great and useful life.

There is a mournful gratification in the melancholy duty of following our departed friends to their last earthly retreat—the grave. It is in obedience to the voice of nature issuing from their very sepulchres, to which also our own hearts are responsive, that we go and see where they have laid them. Fashion has suppressed these strong emotions, and countermanded at once the impulse of nature, the voice of religion, and the custom of thousands of successive ge-

nerations. When Abraham was to be laid in the grave, the office devolved upon his two sons, Isaac and Ishmael. Rispah is found watching the bodies of her slaughtered children by day and by night, till her interposition ceased only because it became useless through the resistless and consuming hand of time. The sisters of Lazarus were not afraid of the grave of their brother. The mother of Jesus had as fine and as acute feelings as the high-born and the high-bred females, who from excess of affectation (for it is not sensibility) abandon their dwelling the moment death enters it: yet *she* was found at the foot of the cross, and did not shrink from the scene of trial while there remained a single maternal duty to fulfil. The family of Jacob are also seen this night collected around his couch, listening to his words, and watching his countenance, till the scene is closed by death.

The voice of God calling away the spirit from its present habitation, sounds in the ears of one man as the death-warrant of all his hopes, all his pleasures, all his schemes, all his peace: to another it will be the pledge of deliverance, the shout of triumph, the seal of immortality. When it is said—"the hour is come"—one man shudders; horror and dismay thrill through all his soul; the blood curdles in his veins; he sickens with apprehension: another feels exultation quicken the palpitations of his heart; joy sparkles in his eyes; expectation sits upon his countenance; hope springs forward on the wings of triumphant anticipation. One man says, 'Behold, I die!—Farewell, my possessions and my honours! Farewell, my children and my servants! Farewell, my hopes and my schemes, my pleasures and my felicity! How terrible, O Death, is thy approach, and how dreadful are thy consequences! This world fades from my eyes, and how fearful are the features of eternity! I am leaving my gods, and there is none to deliver! I see before me the bar of Jesus Christ; but "who may abide the day of his coming, and who shall stand when he appear-eth?" I have refused his friendship; and can I expect his smile? I have slighted his love; and can I receive his approbation? I have consented to live without him, and now he leaves me to die without him—O for a shelter from his indignation!'—Another looks with a calm and bright eye upon the grave, and says, 'I must shortly put off this tabernacle! Welcome, death, welcome glory! Farewell years of misery and of sin! Farewell, world of sorrow and of vanity! Farewell, for a season, my "companions in tribulation!" I go to "my Father, and to your Father; to my God, and to your God." Hail, ye scenes of approaching and unfading felicity. Hail, death, the messenger of peace, the herald of immortality—

“Cease, fond nature, cease thy strife,  
And let me languish into life!”

Thus differently do men think, and speak, and feel upon the same subject: but these different views of death must arise from opposite principles: and there doubtless exists a powerful reason why he is to one man “the king of terrors,” and to another “an angel of light.” It is in connexion with the sufferings and the atonement of our blessed Lord alone, that death loses his sting. “Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.” Faith in this sacrifice had the same influence in former times as in the present day; and if Abraham saw the day of Jesus Christ afar off and rejoiced, we are not to imagine that it was shrouded from the eye of Jacob. The tranquillity of this closing scene of the Patriarch’s life, is to be accounted for on the principles laid down by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, which we have just cited. I will no longer detain you from the great object to which I have introduced you; but turn your attention upon the PROPHECIES which fell from the lips of JACOB in the solemn hour of his departure from this world. The lips of dying men usually are supposed to utter truth: the last moments are usually occupied in recommending the considerations which cleave most closely to the heart: and the breath escaping from the nostrils is seldom wasted on trivial or useless topics.

Ver. 1 and 2. *“And Jacob called unto his sons and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days. Gather yourselves together, and hear, ye sons of Jacob; and hearken unto Israel your father.”* It has been a prevailing opinion from the earliest ages that a power of foretelling future events was communicated in the hour of dissolution. The writings of the ancient classics are full of evidences relative to this point. HOMER has put a prediction into the mouth of PATROCLUS,\* respecting the death of his adversary; and in like manner HECTOR† on the brink of mortality unveils the fate of ACHILLES. SOCRATES supported this opinion, and produced it as an admitted truth upon a very solemn occasion, when he was tried for his own life.‡ XENOPHON puts the same sentiment into the

\* Hom. Iliad. Tom. ii. Lib. xvi. 851, p. 99. Foulis edit. Glasguae.

† Hom. Iliad. Tom. ii. Lib. xxii. v. 355, p. 209.

‡ Plato. Dial. Apolog. Socrat. p. 115, edit. Oxonii, 1752.



mouth of CYRUS; and doubtless he meant it to be considered as his own.\* DIODORUS SICULUS represents it as the established sentiment of philosophy in his day; and as the avowed opinion of illustrious men in the ages that preceded.† It is pleasant to trace the progress of such an impression from its source; and to follow it through successive ages, and over different countries. Our own nation has fostered the opinion; and SHAKSPEARE, who copied from nature, as well in life and manners, as in her operations, has in more instances than one espoused the prevailing idea. Richard the Second and Henry the Sixth predict at the close of their lives future wars; and the language ascribed to Percy states the sentiment in all its force:

“—————O, I could prophesy,  
But that the earthy and cold hand of death  
Lies on my tongue—————.”‡

It is not our business to expose the fallacy of this opinion: nor is it wonderful that those who gathered the immortality of the soul from such evidences as reason alone could furnish, should imagine that a greater flood of light should pour in upon the spirit approaching the confines of superior illumination and glory. But my principal object in producing these instances is to render probable to you a point on which I have no doubt myself, that the thought originally arose from revelation; and that the prophetic penetration ascribed to these celebrated personages—in fact, the sentiment altogether originated in traditions respecting the power of reading futurity, conferred upon the patriarchs in their last moments, so far as their posterity were concerned, and whenever it became desirable to announce something to the world, relative to the coming of the Messiah, who, according to the flesh, was to spring from their loins.

It may be proper to remark, previous to the discussion of the predictions relating to the sons of Jacob, that he adopted Ephraim and Manasseh, the sons of Joseph, as his own children; and that the predictions delivered respecting them, upon that occasion, were exactly fulfilled. “And now thy two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, which were born unto thee in the land of Egypt, before I came unto thee into Egypt, are *mine*: as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine.” And the adoption of these children was distinct from his general regard to the other sons of Joseph, of whom he

\* Zenoph. Cyropæd. Tom. iv. l. viii. p. 339. Hutch. edit. typ. Foulis. Glasg.—  
See, also, Note I. at the end.

† Diod. Sic. lib. xviii. p. 586. Rhod. edit. 1604.

‡ Chalmers' Shakspeare, vol. iv. p. 514. Henry IV. part I.

says—"Thy issue which thou begetteth *after* them, shall be *thine*, and shall be called after the name of their brethren in their inheritance."\* In thus adopting the children of Joseph as his own, and in permitting them to share both his present blessing, and the future, promised inheritance of Canaan, in common with his own sons, he transferred the double portion, which by right belonged to the first born, but which Reuben had forfeited by transgression, to his beloved Joseph. The predictions relating to these children were delivered with that perspicuity which forms the grand characteristic of Scripture Prophecy; and they embrace circumstances singular as it respects the reversion of worldly maxims: for here, as in a variety of other instances in the arrangements of providence, the younger has the pre-eminence of the elder. It should seem, that by the almost uniform preference given to the younger, God designed to counteract the purposes, and to defeat the decisions of men, who always provided for the first born; and to furnish memorable and perpetual evidences, that those vain distinctions in which mankind glory avail nothing before him, but rather that "things which are despised hath he chosen, that no flesh should glory in his presence." "And when Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand upon the head of Ephraim, it displeased him: and he held up his father's hand, to remove it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head. And Joseph said unto his father, Not so, my father: for this is the first born; put thy right hand upon his head. And his father refused, and said, I know it, my son, I know it, he also shall become a people, and he also shall be great: but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become a multitude of nations. And he blessed them that day, saying, In thee shall Israel bless, saying, God make thee as Ephraim, and as Manasseh: and he set Ephraim before Manasseh."† Both these tribes became proverbially prosperous: but Ephraim excelled both in number and in privileges. The tribe of Ephraim became the seat both of the tabernacle and of the kingdom: and a very easy comparison will exemplify their superiority over Manasseh in respect of increase. When Moses numbered the men of war in "the wilderness of Sinai," his estimate of the tribe of Ephraim "from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war," returned him, "forty thousand and five hundred:" upon the same calculation Manasseh furnished but thirty-two thousand two hundred.‡ When in his parting blessing this illustrious

\* Gen. xlviii. 5, 6.

† Gen. xlviii. 17—20.

‡ Numb. i. 32—35. Numb. ii. 18—21.

lawgiver pronounced the eulogy of these two tribes, as an evidence of their comparative strength, he speaks of "the ten thousands of Ephraim," and only of "the thousands of Manasseh."\* So considerable did the tribe of Ephraim become, that his name was frequently, and especially in the prophecies, employed to express the *ten tribes* of Israel, as was that of Judah, to distinguish those which adhered to the house of David.

Perhaps, it is almost needless to observe, that by the term, "*the last days*," is intended simply future times: and assuredly it is unnecessary to produce any instances from the Scriptures to prove that this is the common usage of the phrase. There is one inference deducible from it of importance: that these last words of the patriarchs were not merely blessings; neither bold and uncertain conjectures respecting futurity; but absolute and inspired predictions. Jacob unequivocally assumes this power when he says, "Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which *shall* befall you in the *last days*."

## I. REUBEN.

V. 3 and 4. "*Reuben, thou art my first born, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power. Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel, because thou wentest up to thy father's bed; then defiledst thou it; he went up to my couch.*" Guilt blights the promise of the Spring, and destroys the fruit of the Autumn. In the sad example placed before you, what power is debilitated, what majesty is defaced, what glory is obliterated, what loss is sustained, what penalties are incurred, by the indulgence of one criminal passion! It is recorded for ever against the slaves of appetite: and the condemnation of Reuben rises in judgment before those who resign the reins of self-government to the desires of the flesh. He lost his birth-right, his dignity, his excellency, his power, his pre-eminence, by obeying the impulses of a depraved nature. The lapse of years could not wipe out the blot which the crimes of his youth had fixed upon his character; and God made the lips of a dying father, at a moment when he would feel the sentence most poignantly, pronounce his high displeasure against such deeds of darkness. In the zenith of manhood, Jacob had hailed his first born; and in the solemnities of death, he is compelled, in the bitterness of his heart, and with holy indignation, to strip him of his privileges. And God

\* Deut. xxxiii. 17.



ratified the patriarch's decision. The priesthood passed to Levi, the double portion to Joseph, and the kingdom to Judah. Of all the tribes of Israel, in point both of number and of power, Reuben was the inferior.\*

## II. AND III. SIMEON AND LEVI.

V. 5—7. "*Simeon and Levi are brethren: instruments of cruelty are in their habitations. O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united: for in their anger, they slew a man, and in their self-will they digged down a wall. Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel; I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel.*" There is something inexpressibly tender and endearing in the name of "brethren," when it is designed to represent two persons inseparably united in the bonds of consanguinity, or of pure and fervent friendship: and the term is equally horrible, when it is used, as in the passage before us, to exhibit two persons closely allied in the indulgence of cruelty, the gratification of malignity, and the perpetration of murder. All the unhallowed passions discernible in their separate character acquire double deformity by becoming blended: the mind revolts from the fearful combination; and we regard them with all the horror we should feel, if we beheld a pair of tigers pass by us, rushing from the slaughter, and covered with blood. Such is the fraternity of these brethren. We overlooked the union of nature; and are able to fix our eyes only upon the bonds of malice and of revenge, which drew them more closely together. Their alliance is the concord of sin and of death. The holy "soul" of Jacob shrunk from such society. He expressed his indignation and his abhorrence of their conduct at the time; and so far from being extinguished by age, the just and pious resentment glows in the bosom of the dying patriarch to the last moment. He will have no share in the "secret" plotting, no part in the sanguinary "assembly," no portion, no voice, no lot, in the council over which death presides. His "honour" cannot endure a union with treachery, masked under the semblance of accommodation: nor will he be responsible for "the anger," and "the self-will," which by slaughtering the peaceful inhabitants, took the most effectual way of "digging down the wall" of the city.† Behold, another evidence of the evil of

\* Anc. Univ. vol. ii. b. i. c. 7, note E. p. 485. Dublin edit. 1745. See, also, note 2, at the end of this Lecture.

† See note 3, at the end of the Lecture.

"youthful lusts"—an admonition written in characters of blood. Pollution on the part of the Shechemites exposed them to a violent death; and kindled in the bosoms of the sons of Jacob that "cruel wrath," and that "fierce anger," which unsheathed the "instruments of cruelty," drew down the guilt of murder upon their head, called forth the imprecations of a father in his last hours, substituted a curse for a blessing, deprived them of their inheritance, "divided them in Jacob, and scattered "them in Israel." These evils arose from the indulgence of forbidden lust on the one side; and on the other from disobedience to the explicit admonition, "Vengeance is mine—I will repay, saith the Lord." Levi had no inheritance among his brethren: but the priesthood was assigned him; and he lived upon their tithes. And Simeon was compelled to accept a portion in the lot of Judah,\*

#### IV. JUDAH.

V. 8—12. "*Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise: thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies: thy father's children shall bow down before thee. Judah is a lion's whelp; from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up? The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come, and unto him shall the gathering of the people be. Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes. His eyes shall be red with wine, and his teeth white with milk.*" It will be found, in unfolding these parental benedictions, that the several tribes were blessed in terms that corresponded with the name given to their respective progenitors. The name of Judah signified PRAISE: Jacob employs it as a sort of thesis, and says, "*Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise!*" The point of the prophecy appears to be this—that dominion was to be vested in the hand of Judah, whose majestic and warlike disposition should excite the admiration of his brethren, of whom he was to be the head: "*thy hand shall be in the necks of thine enemies—thy father's children shall bow down before thee;*" and he actually did excel them both in temporal and spiritual prosperity at home, and in the renown of his achievements abroad and in the field. The same thought is carried on through the whole prediction; and is clothed in all the beautiful imagery of eastern composition. We see this illustrious person growing up as a lion's whelp," in courage and in strength, till he becomes irresistible as an "old lion;" who, glutted with slaughter, ascends his native mountains, couches in his gloomy solitudes, reposes after his

\* Josh. xix. 1—9.

toils, and who shall rouse him up?" Nor does the glory of this favoured tribe terminate here. Casting his piercing eye, irradiated by prophetic illumination, over sixteen hundred and eighty-nine years, Jacob sees the day of Jesus Christ, and hails the sweet majesty which was to absorb all exterior dignity. He discerns the empire, which Judah had maintained in defiance of those who had often attempted to wrest it from his powerful grasp, at length resigned, while the hands of the Messiah hold "a sceptre of righteousness," and the dominion preserved for ages, melts away into a "kingdom not of this world"—a kingdom purely spiritual—a "kingdom that cannot be shaken." That this prediction refers to the coming of the Saviour, and the extinction of the temporal authority of this tribe, and indeed of the whole Jewish nation is, I think, evident, partly from the fitness of the passage itself to those great events, and partly from the division, the contradiction, and even the absurdity of those, who have attempted to explain the prophecy otherwise, and to transfer this rod of dominion elsewhere. If by the term *sceptre* we are to understand to its full extent, regal authority, although it can be satisfactorily proved that Judah did actually maintain the empire, with prodigious struggles till the time of Christ's advent approached: yet there is a difficulty in explaining how it could be said that the sceptre should be preserved absolutely to the very period, and not depart till Shiloh came. The solution afforded by Bishop Newton,\* appears to me, upon the whole, the most complete and satisfactory of any which I have seen: and I shall pursue a train of thought which corresponds with his exposition of this prophecy. To apprehend it more readily, allow me to arrange what I have to offer to meet this difficulty under three leading observations:

First, the original word,† translated *sceptre*, signifies a *staff*, or *rod of office*; and will therefore apply to an inferior magistrate as well as a regal one.

Secondly, The term, "*Lawgiver*,"‡ may mean, in its original acceptance, "the *Judge* of a tribe;" there is therefore no necessity to apply it here exclusively to a monarch.

Thirdly, by the term "*Shiloh*,"§ I understand *the MESSIAH*; and for the following reasons:

\* Bp. Newton on the Proph. vol. I. sect. iv. Proph. of Jacob, p. 52. &c.

† שֵׁבֶט. See Taylor's Heb. Concord. on the various senses of the word: Newton as above: Anc. Univ. Hist. vol. II. b. i. c. 7. note G. p. 486, &c. See, also, note 4, at the end of the Lecture, on the different criticisms and opinions respecting this passage.

‡ מְחַקֵּק. On this and the preceding word, see the foregoing writers, also Saur. Disc. &c. sur la Bible. Tome I. Disc. xli. p. 252, &c. Fol.

\* שִׁלֹה.



1. Almost all the various readings of the word, in the several translations of this passage in different ancient languages, such as the Syriac, the Septuagint, and others, use a corresponding phrase expressive of some distinguishing attribute of the Messiah. Some read it, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until he shall come, who is *THE SENT*:"\* others render it, 'He, whose it is:†' others again read it, until the Peacemaker come."‡ It will be evident that these different readings accord well with our application of it to the Messiah.§

2. The most respectable Targums, or Jewish paraphrases, agree in applying this passage to the Messiah. They enlarge upon it with singular eloquence and with unusual ardour of expression. And in their comments upon the figurative language employed by the dying patriarch to elucidate the triumph of this august personage, they say, "How beautiful is King Messiah, who shall arise out of the house of Judah; he girdeth his loins, he descendeth, he setteth the battle in array against his enemies, and slayeth many kings."|| This interpretation will serve to show the sense which the early Jewish writers affixed to the prediction, and particularly to the term *Shiloh*. The Targum of Onkelos, which is more ancient, according to general agreement, than the period of our Lord's incarnation, expressly affirms, as the meaning of the text, "There shall not be taken away, one having the principality, from the house of Judah, nor a scribe from his children's children, till Messias come, whose is the kingdom."¶

3. Some later writers, both Jewish and Christian, who have attempted to change the object of the prophecy, have been extremely incoherent and even absurd in their interpretations, have been much puzzled and divided in their applications, and at last, have not been able at all satisfactorily to show any correspondence between the departure of the dominion from Judah, and the persons to whom they have applied the prediction. It has been supposed of Moses, of Saul, of Jeroboam, of Nebuchadnezzar, without the shadow of a reason: and it has been applied even to David, under whom Judah was so far from losing the sceptre, that he *obtained* it at that very period, and held it over all the other tribes.

\* The Vulgate.

† The Syriac; and some copies of the Septuagint ὁ ἀποκριτὰς "he for whom it is reserved."

‡ The Samaritan. Bp. Newton derives שלה from *tranquillus, pacificus fuit*.

§ See note 5, at the end.

|| Fell's and Hunter's Lectures on the Ev. of Christ. Lect. II. p. 35, 36.

¶ Bp. Newton on the Proph. vol. I. sect. iv. p. 56.

4. Because, when these words were applied to the Messiah, with the exposition which has been given of the terms *sceptre* and *law-giver*, the prophecy has been exactly fulfilled. For Judah never did lack "a Judge," or want "a rod of office" till "the Messiah" appeared: but after that he was "cut off," "the Romans came and took away their place and nation." From that period, not only Judah, to whom the dominion was granted by his expiring father, and who maintained it through the longest period of time, but all the tribes have been scattered over the face of the whole earth, without an altar or a judge, without a temple or a sceptre, for nearly eighteen centuries. In the mean time, the "gathering of the people or the Gentiles, has been to "the Shiloh," or Messiah: after whose death they began to flow together," and to submit themselves to his righteous government. These proselytes are continually increasing, and shall continue so to do, till in the fulness of time the prediction of Simeon shall be accomplished, and Jesus shall indeed be "a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of his people Israel." His attractions shall be felt yet more powerfully, when at his second appearance, they shall come from the East, and from the West, from the North, and from the South, and shall sit down with him in his kingdom, and he shall "reign for ever and ever."

The remaining part of the prediction is extremely beautiful, whether it be understood as applying to Judah or to Jesus. In respect to Judah, it describes the richness and fertility of his country; and there are some remarkable coincidences of expression in this prophecy with some future circumstances and some future representations respecting the Messiah. It may be the indulgence of fancy,\* but when I read of "binding his foal to the vine, and his ass's colt to the choice vine," I am wafted in imagination to Jerusalem, and see the Saviour riding through its gates in triumph, upon "an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass:" when it is said, "he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes," I cannot but remember that Jesus "trod the wine-press alone"—that he "stained all his raiment"—that he represented his own sufferings by the "blood of the grape"—and that he, whose name is the WORD OF GOD, appeared in a vesture dipped in blood: when it is added, "his eyes shall be red with wine, and his teeth white with milk," while the plenty and prosperity of Judah may be intended, it is not altogether inapplicable to Jesus. Suffering (more than once typified by wine) will make the eyes red, as well as the juice of the grape; and what agonies more likely

\* If it be fancy, it is a flight in which the earliest Jewish writers have indulged—See the foregoing appeal to their oldest Targums.

to suffuse the languid orbs with that sanguinary hue, than the death of the cross? May not the whiteness of the teeth be an emblem of purity—the purity of the victim? I lay not particular stress upon this interpretation; nor shall I be greatly moved if it be pronounced fanciful; I would rather indulge in fancies which lead me to the Saviour, than in those which allure from him. I had rather meet him in imagination in every word of this prediction, than miss him as some have done altogether, who have not been able to find the Messiah in the whole passage. I had rather turn out of my way to introduce him, than avoid him when he crosses my path. If I forget thee, O Jesus, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth! let these lips be sealed in the silence of the grave, rather than refuse the theme of thy sufferings and of thy dignity. Thou who art Judah's offspring and David's Lord, the life, the light, the energy of these scriptures, let me die rather than deny thee!

#### V. ZEBULUN.

V. 13. "*Zebulun shall dwell at the haven of the sea; and he shall be for a haven of ships; and his border shall be unto Zidon.*" Had this venerable patriarch lived two hundred and fifty years after the delivery of this prediction, and had he been present when Joshua divided the promised land among the sons of Jacob, he could not have described the portion of Zebulun with greater accuracy. His inheritance extended from the sea of Galilee, otherwise called the lake Tiberias, by which it was bounded on the East, to the Mediterranean, which formed a barrier to its western limitation. What wisdom was that, which already began to mark out the situation of the respective tribes! and what power was that, by which the design announced in prophecy, was carried into complete execution!

#### VI. ISSACHAR.

V. 14 and 15. *Issachar is a strong ass couching down between two burdens. And he saw that rest was good, and the land that it was pleasant; and bowed his shoulders to bear, and became a servant unto tribute.*" The passage reads, literally rendered, Issachar is *an ass of bone*, a term sufficiently expressive of prodigious strength. Force of body, and energy of mind, are very frequently separated; and this powerful tribe is described as destitute of great spirit and courage. The general outline of this prediction is clearly expressed, and has been literally accomplished. The portion of Issachar was "pleasant:" but it was subjected to oppression, and infested by frequent depredations. We are apt, in the hour of discontent, to say of our neigh-



bours, "the lot has fallen to them in pleasant places;" but if we knew all, we should find this "goodly heritage," exposed to calamity no less than our own. The most pleasant portions, are frequently, like the lot of Issachar, the most dangerous. They have their peculiar disadvantages; and these sometimes more than counterbalance their attractions. They excite envy, they encourage attack, they are hard to defend, they may bring us into bondage. Thus, Issachar was exposed to the hand of violence; and in order to preserve his "pleasant land," "he bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant unto tribute."

## VII. DAN.

V. 16—18. "*Dan shall judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel. Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path; that biteth the horse-heels, so that his rider shall fall backward. I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord!*"—The name *Dan*, signifies a *Judge*; and from this circumstance the prediction of the patriarch runs in a corresponding strain. The right of judging did not belong to Dan, more than to the other tribes: nor is it once intimated that he should have the pre-eminence in this point; since the language employed is—he shall "judge his people, *as*" or "*like*" one of the tribes of Israel. It may be asked why a right so confessedly general, should be so particularly and expressly awarded to him as an individual? I imagine for the following reason. Dan, as well as some others of the sons of Jacob, was the offspring of a *concubine*; and unless this right had been expressly assigned him, the descendants of Jacob by his *wives* might have usurped authority over him, and his brethren. As he is first mentioned of that line, to him the right is given; but that which is said of him, is to be understood of them all. The meaning of the grant will then be, that he (and, with him, his brethren) should not be subjected to any other tribe, but should have the absolute right of judgment within himself upon all occasions, without the interference of his brethren: in other words, that the sons of the concubines, should have equal privileges and portions, with the sons of Leah and of Rachel.

The other parts of the prediction are highly expressive of the subtlety of that tribe, whose disposition, it should seem, was to subdue their enemies more by cunning than by open violence; and this character, given them by their great progenitor, was justified and exhibited, when, two hundred and eighty-three years afterward, they "came to Laish, to a people that were *quiet and secure*, and smote them with the edge of the sword, and burned the city with fire, and there was no deliverer."—"And they built a city, and dwelt therein,

and called the name of the city Dan, after the name of Dan their father."\* How strikingly expressive of the sudden blow given by craftiness to security, is the image of "the adder† in the path, biting the horse's heels," and throwing "the rider!"

Thus far had the patriarch proceeded when the powers of nature were exhausted; and the direction of his mind immediately discovers itself. The magnet is not more faithful to the northern pole, than are his affections to his unchangeable Friend. Constrained to break off in the midst of his benedictions, while he pauses, he prays, and with the confidence of faith exclaims, "I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord!"—Nor did he wait in vain! Recovering a little strength, before he went hence to be no more seen, he resumed the interesting and momentous subject, which weakness had suspended, and addressed,

### VIII. GAD.

V. 19. "*Gad—a troop shall overcome him: but he shall overcome at the last.*" The name *Gad*, signifies "*a troop*;" and the dying father avails himself of it, to depict those vicissitudes of war which his posterity should suffer. And thus was it accomplished; the inheritance of Gad lay beyond Jordan, exposed to the incursions of the Arabs, the Ammonites, the Moabites, and other nations lying eastward, hostile to Israel. As in all such contentions, so Gad was sometimes subdued and sometimes was conqueror: but respecting most of them he had ultimately the advantage, and maintained the possession of his allotted territory. One instance of his success, you may read at your leisure (for why should I occupy the time so far advanced, in detailing scenes of blood at which humanity shudders?) in the first book of Chronicles, the fifth chapter, from the eighteenth to the twenty-second verse, inclusive. Thus, also, the Christian advances—"faint, yet pursuing." He is often foiled, but will finally come off "more than conqueror." Like "*Gad, a troop may overcome him, but he shall surely overcome at the last.*"

### IX. ASHER.

V. 20. "*Out of Asher his bread shall be fat, and he shall yield royal dainties.*" This language is highly descriptive of the extreme fertility of that track of country which fell to the share of Asher: an

\* Judges xviii. 27—29.

† The Vulgate and the Septuagint have used the word *Cerastes*, which is a kind of serpent, so called from its having two fleshy horns: its property is to hide itself in the sand, and to fasten upon whatever animal passes over its insidious retreat. See Dr. Geddes, and Anc. Univ. Hist. in locum.

inheritance which not merely furnished the *necessaries*, but also the *luxuries* of human life, in its prolific produce. Such will be the portion of the Christian, when the good land which rises before him, shall be divided by the Saviour's hand among the sons of God! and who does not desire to share the "royal dainties" of that spiritual feast, of which our best ordinances are only types, and are bestowed as refreshments by the way?

## X. NAPHTALI.

V. 21. "*Naphtali is a hind let loose: he giveth goodly words.*" That a "hind let loose" should be figurative of the liberty enjoyed by Naphtali: and that "giving goodly words" should imply eloquence, I can readily conceive—but for neither the one nor the other do I recollect that in any instance Naphtali had the pre-eminence of his brethren. The total want of connexion between the images employed and the future situation of Naphtali, so as that the one should be the counterpart of the other, which the prophecy has been to the circumstances of the other tribes in every preceding instance; and the incoherence and want of unity between the first and the last clause of the same verse, convince me that something is wrong. The learned Bochart removes the whole difficulty, and elucidates the passage, only by altering a little the punctuation of the original; and it then reads, "Naphtali is a spreading tree, shooting forth beautiful branches."\* This rendering agrees with the translation of the Septuagint, with the Chaldee paraphrase, with the Arabic version: it renders the passage intelligible; and the accomplishment of the prophecy is complete. Nor are we to wonder that the changing a few arbitrary points should make so essential a difference in translation: when a very trifling alteration will sometimes make a considerable change in the sense of a word even in our own language.

A modern critic has, however, removed every difficulty, and at the same time translated the passage, as it appears to me, more consistently with the original, and in greater harmony with the connexion. In blessing every tribe the patriarch had preserved a distinction of imagery; but if the translation of Bochart be admitted, Naphtali invades the right of Joseph; and the same metaphor is continued in the succeeding benediction. This ingenious author proposes to read it, "Naphtali is a deer roaming at liberty; he shooteth forth spreading branches"—or "majestic antlers." Here the distinction of imagery is preserved; at the same time that the same idea is conveyed. Still the fecundity of the tribe, and the fertility

\* See Dr. Geddes' translation and remarks on this verse: also *Anc. Univ. Hist.* vol. II. b. i. p. 492. Note O. Also Bochart *Hierog.* at the end.



of his lot, is exhibited. Abundance of pasturage will no less promote the branching of the horns of the stag, and the growth and beauty of his shape, than richness of soil cause the "spreading terebinth," or any other tree, to increase in vegetation. Upon every account, therefore, I prefer this last reading.\*

Of all the tribes Naphtali appears to have multiplied the most rapidly. He had but four sons, when he went down into Egypt, and when his posterity came out of it, in the course of only about two centuries, they mustered upwards of fifty-three thousand men, capable of bearing arms!

## XI. JOSEPH.

V. 22—26. "*Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well: whose branches run over the wall. The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him. But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong, by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob: from thence is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel. Even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee, and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts, and of the womb: The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of thy progenitors, unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills: they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren.*"—How the good man's bosom glows, while he pronounces the paternal blessing upon this darling son, and predicts his prosperity! How he unites the retrospect of the past, with the promise of the future! How eloquent is affection! And what a burst of love and of piety, from the pallid lips, is directed towards his long-lost, restored, admired Joseph! I do not love to paraphrase Scripture language: I think it is never done without weakening the divinely energetic original; yet there is much in this language, that appears to require elucidation; and I cannot find a way to express the sense in which I understand the passage, except by doing that, which, however practised by eminent men, and sanctioned by custom, I cannot approve—throwing it into other language. He says in effect—"As for thee, my son, like "a fruitful bough," nourished by a perpetual spring, thy "branches" shall spread, and thy 'posterity shall widely diffuse themselves, in the land promised by the God of thy fathers. "The archers," thy envious brethren, "have sorely shot at thee, and hated thee;" but the "arms" of my God have sustained thee; and not only sustained thee, but through his favour thou hast been the support of thy family, and hast nourished me in old

\* See *Scripture Illustrated*, by the Editor of Calmet; in which there is a paper expressly on this subject, satisfactorily justifying this translation.

age: thou hast been “the shepherd and stone of Israel;” and art a type of Him who shall come, and in a more eminent degree bear that character and sustain that office. Fear not: “the Almighty shall bless thee” with the sweet influences “of heaven,” and shall give thee the dew, with the early and the latter rain: “the deep” shall yield its tribute also, and pour forth its blessings at thy feet: thy posterity shall not waste, nor shall there be barrenness in thy tribe; for I have blessed thee, with no common regard. I have not retailed “the blessings of my progenitors” in blessing thee: but my “blessings have prevailed” on thy behalf “above” them all, and are heard on yonder “everlasting hills.” May they increase and abound! yea, they shall be heard and answered; “on the head of Joseph” shall they rest, and as a “crown” shall they encircle the brow of him, who was “separated” from his family by malice—separated “from his brethren” by holiness—and separated by his God for good!—Thus was the tribe of Joseph actually distinguished till Christ came.

## XII. BENJAMIN.

V. 27. “*Benjamin shall raven as a wolf: in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil.*” The warlike disposition of Benjamin’s posterity is the manifest subject of this prediction, and is exhibited under an allusion to the ferocity of one of the most rapacious and persevering animals among the beasts of prey. The evidence of the accomplishment of this prophecy, in the whole history of this tribe, is as clear, as are the terms in which their temper is foretold. I need only appeal to one striking instance of their fierceness, which is recorded in the twentieth chapter of the book of Judges, and which will be present to every one’s recollection, when for three days they withstood the assaults of the armies of Israel, on a memorable occasion, and twice routed them, being defeated at the last with considerable difficulty.

V. 28. Thus have we endeavoured to establish the purpose of the present Lecture: for “*all these are the twelve tribes of Israel, and this is it that their father spake unto them; and blessed them: every one according to his blessing he blessed them.*” We ask you only to see him resign his interests in this world; and then we will release your attention from the subject, to ponder in your own hearts the solemn scene, and to prepare for the eventful period when you shall be stretched upon the same couch of mortality.

V. 29—33. “*And he charged them, and said unto them, I am to be gathered unto my people: bury me with my fathers, in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite, in the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham*

*bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite, for a possession of a burying place. (There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife, there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife, and there I buried Leah.) The purchase of the field and of the cave that is therein, was from the children of Heth. And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people."* We usually love to know how great characters leave the troubled scenes of time; and we are gratified to-night in witnessing the tranquil close of an agitated life. There are certain great principles in our nature which discover themselves in the very article of death; and among these is the well-known propensity which we feel to be anxious respecting the rites of sepulture. We are not satisfied with having enjoyed the converse of those whom we loved while they were yet alive, but we wish to repose by them when dead. It is our last desire that our bones should lie by their bones; and that our dust should mingle with their dust. It is the last earthly thing that occupies our attention. Thus was it with Jacob: and that he regarded it with no common solicitude, is evident from the reiterated charge, and from the particular description of the spot again and again repeated. Recognise in the dying patriarch your own feelings, and learn that he is "flesh of your flesh." See, how strongly nature lives with him! He has done with the things of time. They attract, they torment him no more. His earthly career hastens to close. He is breathing the last sigh. One thought, and only one is stolen from heaven, and it hovers over the dust of his departed family. Lay the map of the world before him—he regards not its empires—his eye glides over them, in search of another object: it fixes upon a little obscure field, and there he buries his remaining earthly wishes. Remove that spot, and the whole globe is nothing to him: it excites no interest, it retains no farther tie upon him. There his last reflections linger, till they are recalled to the skies. "There," said he, "they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife, there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife, and there I buried Leah." With feelings something akin to these, the Christian sends his thoughts to Calvary, and his affections linger upon the sacred mount with mournful delight, while he reflects "There they crucified him."

But the bonds of nature could no longer hold a spirit so prepared for heaven. The last wish was expressed; the last struggle was felt; and he fled to enjoy the immediate presence of God, and to join the society of those, whom, living, he loved, and dying, he fondly remembered!—

"Let me die the death of the righteous; and let my last end be like his!"—



## NOTES.

## NOTES TO THE FOURTH LECTURE.

NOTE 1.—Respecting the prevailing opinion in all ages, that dying men prophesied, I mentioned in the preceding lecture the following illustrations. Patroclus predicts the death of Hector:

Ἄλλο δέ τοι ἐρέω, σὺ δ' ἐνὶ φρεσὶ βάλλεο σῆτιν,  
Οὐ θην' ἔδ' αὐτὸς δὴρὸν βέη, ἀλλά τοι ἡδὴ  
Ἀγχι παρέστηκεν θάνατος καὶ μοῖρα κραταιή,  
Χερσὶ δαμέντ' Ἀχιλλὸς ἀμύμονος Αἰακίδαο.

*Hom. Il. tom. ii. l. xvi. v. 851. Foulis edit. Glasguæ.*

But thou, imperious! bear my latest breath;  
The gods inspire it, and it sounds thy death.  
Insulting man! thou shalt be soon, as I;  
Black fate hangs o'er thee, and thy hour draws nigh;  
Ev'n now on life's last verge I see thee stand,  
I see the fall, and by Achilles' hand!

*Pope's Hom. Iliad, b. xvi. l. 1026—1030, vol. iii.*

Thus Hector also predicts under similar circumstances the death of Achilles.

Τὸν δ' ἐκαταβησκὼν προσίφη κορυθαίολος Ἑκτωρ·  
Ἡ σ' εὖ γινώσκων προτίσσομαι, ἔδ' ἄρ' ἔμελλον  
Πείσειν· ἡ γὰρ σοὶ γε σιοηρεὸς ἔνδοθι θυμὸς·  
Φεράζεις νῦν, μητοὶ τι θεῶν μηνίμα γένωμαι  
Ἡματι τῷ, ὅτε κέν σε Πάρις καὶ Φοῖβος Ἀπολλων,  
Ἐσθλὸν ἔοντ', ὀλέσσωσιν ἐνὶ Σκαιῇσι πύλῃσιν.

*Hom. Il. tom. ii. l. xxii v. 355. Foulis edit. Glasguæ.*

Then thus the chief his dying accents drew;  
Thy rage, implacable! too well I knew:  
The furies that relentless breast have steel'd,  
And curst thee with a heart that cannot yield.  
Yet think, a day will come, when fates decree  
And angry gods, shall wreak this wrong on thee;  
Phœbus and Paris shall avenge my fate,  
And stretch thee here, before the Scæan gate.

*Pope's Hom. Iliad, b. xxii. l. 445—452. vol. iv.*

Plato puts the same sentiment into the mouth of Socrates, at his condemnation. Τὸ δὲ δὴ μετὰ τὸ ἐπιθυμῶ ὑμῖν χρησιμεύουσαι, ὧ καταψηφισάμενοί μὲ καὶ γὰρ εἰμι ἡδὴ ἐνταῦθα, ἐν ᾧ μάλιστα ἄνθρωποι χρησιμεύουσιν, ὅταν μέλλωσιν ἀποθανεῖσθαι. He then goes on to name some events likely to arise after his death—and concludes, ταῦτα μὲν εἰ ὑμῖν τοῖς καταψηφισαμένοις μαντευσάμενος, ἀπαλάττομαι.

*Plato. Dial. Apol. Soc. p. 115, 116, edit. Oxon. 1752.*

Xenophon, in his apology for Socrates, preceding Memorabilium, represents him as justifying his own prediction under those circumstances, by maintaining it as the universal sentiment of the world at the time, and by appealing to those very instances in Homer, which I have cited. Ἀλλὰ μὲντοι (φάναι αὐτὸν) ἀνέθηκε μὲν καὶ Ὀμηρος,

ἔσθιν οἷς τῶν ἐν καλῶν τὰ βίᾳ προγιγνώσκουσιν τὰ μέλλοντα βεβαιῶσαι δὲ καὶ ἐγὼ χρησμοδεῖναι τί· &c.

*Xenoph. Apol. Soc. p. 14. Londini edit. 1720.*

The same writer, in his *Cyropædia*, makes his dying hero thus speak—comparing death to a sleep—*Εννοησατε δὲ, ἔφη, ὅτι ἐγγύτερον μὲν τῷ ἀνθρώπινῳ θανάτῳ ἔστιν ὕπνῳ· ἡ δὲ τῶ ἀνθρώπου ψυχῇ τότε δηρὰ θειοτάτῃ καταφαίνεται, καὶ τότε τὶ τῶν μελλόντων προσεῖν· τότε γὰρ, ὡς εἶποι, μάλιστα ἐλευθερεῖται.*

*Xenoph. Cyropæd. tom. iv. lib. viii. p. 339, Duodec. ex. edit. Hutchinson. ex-cud. Foulis, Glasgux, 1767.*

The exordium of the eighteenth book of the *Hist. of Diod. Sic.* tends throughout to illustrate this opinion. He quotes the sentiment of Pythagoras, who argues the immortality of the soul from the circumstance, which he firmly believed, and which was the current opinion, of men predicting events at their death. He passes on to notice the account which Homer gives, and which has been already noticed, of two of his heroes. He then comes to the point of his history to which these remarks tended, and observes that Alexander foresaw, and foretold the divisions which would arise out of his death. The whole is well worthy perusal, as an exhibition of the sentiment universally prevailing on this point.

*Diod. Sic. Lib. xviii. p. 586, Rhod. edit. 1604.*

NOTE 2.—Respecting Reuben, the writers of the *Anc. Univ. History* observe—“The sequel of the Jewish history shows, that the tribe of Reuben did still remain in obscurity, and without any of the marks of distinction which used to be annexed to the right of primogeniture, such as a double portion, supreme authority, and the priesthood. Accordingly, the Jewish Expositors, especially the *Bereshith Rabbah*, or large comment on *Genesis*, tell us (*Beresh. Rab. sect. 98.*) that he fell from the three-fold dignity, viz., *המלכות והכהונה והכבוד* primogeniture, priesthood, and royal dignity: But because thou art fallen, continues the commentator, thy primogeniture is given to Joseph (who accordingly had two portions allotted to him,) the priesthood to *Levi*, and the sceptre to *Judah*. And where it is said of this last (*Gen. xlix. 8.*) thy brethren shall praise thee, he paraphrases it thus: *כל אחיך נקראים על שמך והיו* Thy brethren shall be called by thy name, that is, they will not say, I am a Reubenite, or a Simeonite, but a *יהודי* Jehudi, a Jew.”

*Anc. Univ. Hist. vol. ii. c. 7, p. 484, 485. Note. Dublin edit. 1745.*

Dr. Geddes renders “unstable as water thou shalt not excel”—“like water thou hast lapsed.”—*Sep. ἐξῴρισας*. Vulg. “Effusus es,”—and applies it to the lapsing of all Reuben’s former pre-eminence.

NOTE 3.—The same critic renders, “they digged down a wall”—in reference to Simeon and Levi—“they extirpated a chief”—“The Hebrew is *עקרו שור*, which is rendered by the *Sep. ενεσροκοπησαν ταυρον*, *They ham-strung, or houghed a bull*. Vulg. “*Suffoderunt murrum*. And this is the meaning most generally affixed to *שור*, &c.

*Geddes’ Crit. Rem. p. 144, on Gen. xlix. 6.*

The writers of the *Anc. Univ. Hist.* remark on these brethren—“Jacob’s words imply a double dispersion, namely, of the two tribes from one another, and their being interspersed among the rest. And, accordingly, Levi had no inheritance among his brethren in the land of Canaan, but had a certain number of cities assigned to it in every tribe. As for that of Simeon, it had properly but a portion of *Judah’s* inheritance (*Jos. xix. i. et seq.*) if we except some few places which they got upon mount Seir, and in the wilds of the valley of Gedor. *1 Chron. iv. 39, 40.*”

*Anc. Univ. Hist. vol. ii. c. 7, p. 485.*

NOTES 4 and 5.—I cannot refrain from giving at length the excellent remarks of the writers of the *Anc. Univ. Hist.* on this important reference to the Messiah, contained in the predictions relative to *Judah*, his tribe, and his future lot. “The sense, as well as completion, of this noble prophecy, being very much disputed between the Jews

and us, we have endeavoured to render the latter part of the verse more agreeably to the original,\* which in its plain and obvious sense affirms that the sceptre shall not depart from Judah—till both Shiloh was come, and the nations gathered unto, or brought to his obedience. This version is farther proved by the event; for the Jews did not lose their sceptre, or Sanhedrim, which was their בית דין Beth din, or highest court of judicature and supreme legislative power, till the heathen became converts to Christianity, of whom Cornelius was the first: and the Jews themselves own, that the supreme court did still subsist, from the time of Moses the founder of it, to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. They likewise own, that the word שבט Sheveth, which we translate sceptre, doth not always signify the royal power of dignity, but sometimes only the legislative. The latter Jews, therefore, finding themselves pinched by this prophecy, rather than allow the received interpretation of the ancients, which is agreeable to ours, have fallen into various absurd notions which they are not ashamed to defend with a zeal peculiar to them. Thus some will have the meaning of this passage to be, that the Messiah shall not come, till Shiloh, the place so called, be destroyed, or the Jewish monarchy be at an end. Others by Sheveth understand a tribe, which that word also signifies, and think the meaning to be, that Judah should not cease to be a tribe till the coming of the Messiah: in which they have been also followed by some Christians; because that tribe did visibly subsist as such till the destruction of Jerusalem—but so did that of Levi. However, many of our modern Jews stand stiffly to this sense, and scruple not to affirm, that it has subsisted, not only to that time, but even to this very day, pure and unmixed. Others add, that it retains still a kind of sceptre, or royal power, beyond the river Euphrates, and that the Nassi, or head of it, is a prince lineally descended from Judah, whose splendour, dignity and power, over his own tribe, is little inferior to that of a king—but *credal Judæus*—. 'Tis certain we have only their bare word for this imaginary kingdom. They likewise disagree not with us, but even among themselves, about the meaning of the word מחקק Mechokek, law-giver.

“As to the word שילה Shiloh, though it be almost universally owned to mean the Messiah, yet as to its original signification there is no small disagreement. St. Jerome reads it Shaloch, from שלח Shalach, *to send*, reading ח for ה. Others from שלה Shalah, *to be peaceable*, and understand by Shiloh a peace-maker. Others derive it שיל Shil, which they will have to signify a *Son*, because שליה Shiliah, or Shilijah, signifies the secundine of a woman:† but it is plain the first of these is no where to be found in the Old Testament, and the second only in one place, where it most probably signifies the secundine. A modern critic takes the word Shiloh to signify *the end*, and the sense of the words to be, that from the time the sceptre comes into the tribe of Judah, will continue in it, till that tribe be at an end: but his opinion has been lately confuted, among many others, by M. Saurin, in an elaborate discourse on that subject. Another modern author tells us, that it ought to be derived from שלה Shulah, *to fatigue, be tired, suffer*, and to be applied by the sufferings of the Messiah; but without fatiguing our readers any farther, the most probable sense of the word, if the change of a letter be allowed, will be that of the Septuagint, Onkelos, and some others; who read it שילי Sheloh, that is, *he to whom it belongs*, י and ה being often interchanged in the sacred book, (Vid. 2. Sam. xvi. 10 and 18,) the sense will be plainly this, that the sceptre, or legislative power, shall not depart from, but be deposited in, the tribe of Judah, until the right owner, or he, *Sheló*, to whom it of right belongs, has made his appearance in the world. This sense seems the most easy, natural, and agreeable to the original, as well as the most applicable to Christ, the King of Kings. As for the redundant י in שילו Shilo, it is agreeable to the property of the word Ehevi, as the grammarians speak.”

*Anc. Univ. Hist. vol. II. c. 7, p. 486—488. Note G. Dublin edit. of 1745.*

Bp. Newton has criticised very much at length upon the same passage, and has accumulated on this point many evidences exactly corresponding with the testimony just cited. “The word שבט *Shebet*, which we translate a *sceptre*, signifies a *rod*, or *staff* of any kind; and particularly the rod or staff which belonged to each tribe as an ensign of their authority; and thence it is transferred to signify a *tribe*, as being

\* “Until Shiloh be come, and the people be gathered unto him.”

† “That wherein the infant is wrapped; and thence, by a metonymy, the infant itself.”

*Newton on Prophecy in loc.*



united under one rod, or staff of government; or a ruler of a tribe; and in this sense it is used twice in this very chapter.—Ver. 16. ‘Dan shall judge his people, as one of the tribes, or rulers of Israel:’—and again, ver. 28. ‘All these are the twelve tribes, or rulers of Israel.’ It signifies the same in 2 Sam. vii. 7. 1 Chron. xvii. 6. The word doth indeed sometimes signify a *sceptre*, but that is apt to convey an idea of kingly authority, which was not the thing intended here: and the Seventy translate it *αρχων* a ruler (*ακ εκλειψε αρχων εξ Ισραηλ*, Sept.) which answers better to a law-giver in the following clause.”—Again—“The sense of the word *sceptre* will help us to fix and determine the meaning of the other word *מִשְׁכֶּה* *mechokek*, which we translate a *law-giver*. For if they are not synonymous, they are not very different. Such as the government is, such must be the law-giver. The government was only of a single tribe, and the law-giver could be of no more. Nor had the tribe of Judah at any time a legislative authority over all the other tribes, no, not even in the reigns of David and Solomon. (See 1 Chron. xxv. 1, Ezra viii. 20, 1 Chron. xxix. 22: in all these instances every thing was done with the consent and approbation of the princes and rulers of Israel.) Indeed, the whole nation had but one law, and one law-giver, in the strict sense of the word. The king himself was not properly a law-giver; he was only to have ‘a copy of the law,’ &c., Deut. xvii. &c. Moses was truly, as he is styled, *the law-giver*, Num. xxi. 18, Deut. xxxiii. 21, and when the word is applied to any other person or persons, as Judah is twice called, by the Psalmist, *my law-giver* (Ps. lx. 7, cviii. 8,) it is used in a lower signification. For it signifies not only a law-giver, but a *judge*; not only one who maketh laws, but likewise one who exerciseth jurisdiction: and in the Greek it is translated *αρχαμενος*, a leader, or president; (*και ηγαμενος εκ των μηρων αυτου*, Sept.) in the Chaldee, a scribe; (*neque scriba a filiis filiorum ejus*, Chald.) in the Syriac, an *expositor*; (*et expositor de inter pedes ejus*, Syr.) and in our English Bible, it is elsewhere translated a *governor*. (Judges v. 14.) The *law-giver*, therefore, is to be taken in a restrained sense, as well as the *sceptre*; and, perhaps, it cannot be translated better than *Judge*.” He goes on to produce the different readings and explanations of the word *Shiloh*, which have been already cited in the note of the Anc. Univ. Hist. or which are contained in some critical remarks of Dr. Geddes about to follow; but he thus ably refutes the rendering of M. Le Clerc, who refused to find the Messiah in this illustrious passage: and who translates, “until Shiloh come,” “until the end,”—“for he says, that Shiloh signifies *finis ejus, aut cessatio*; his end, or ceasing, and that it may be referred to the law-giver, or to the sceptre, or to Judah himself.” (“He says that *שִׁלּוֹה* *Shiloh* is the same as *שִׁלּוֹ* *Shilo*, and *שִׁל* *Shil* may be derived from *שׁוּל* *Shul*, and *Shul*, is the same as *שׁוּלָה* *Shalah*, which in Chaldee signifies *cessare, desinere*—*finis aut cessatio verti poterit*. Hoc posito, *finis ejus poterit ad legislatorem, aut ad sceptrum referri, aut etiam ad ipsum Judam*. Comment. in loc.”) But the Bishop well remarks—“If it be referred to the *law-giver*, or to the *sceptre*, what is it but an unmeaning tautology? ‘There shall be a law-giver as long as there shall be a law-giver! There shall not be an end of the sceptre, till the end of the sceptre come!’ If it be referred to Judah, or to the tribe of Judah, the thing is by no means true: for the tribe of Judah subsisted long after they had lost the kingdom, and were deprived of all royal authority.” He goes on to quote the Targums, the authors of the Talmud, and a variety of other testimonies, and then concludes—“I think no doubt can remain, that by the coming of *Shiloh* is meant the coming of the Messiah.”

Newton on Proph. vol. 1, Dissert. iv. p. 52—56, *passim*.

Dr. Geddes, who labours to destroy the reference of this passage to the Messiah, nevertheless, collects many important criticisms upon it. He says—“As the explanation of the whole passage depends chiefly on the meaning of one word *שִׁלּוֹה*, *Shiloh*; let us endeavour to find out that meaning. And let us see how the word has been rendered by ancient interpreters. Sept. *τα αποκειμενα αυτω* in the four printed editions, and in most of the Greek Fathers: but three MSS. with Copt. have *ο αποκειται αυτω*. Seven have only *ο αποκειται*; which, according to Justin Mart. and some other Greek Fathers, was the original reading of Sep. and rendered by the Latins *cui repositum est*, or *cui reservatum est*. This was also the reading of Aquila and Symmachus. Syr. *הַי לַמֶּלֶךְ הַזֶּה* *to whom it* (the sceptre) *belongs*. Onk. *הַי לַמֶּלֶךְ הַזֶּה*—*The Messiah, whose is the kingdom*. So equivalently both the Targums and Pers.—Saadias *אֵלֶּי הַלָּה* in the same meaning with Syr.—Arab.

Erp. and Gr. Ven. retain the Hebrew word שִׁלְחָה, שִׁלְחָה—Singular is the rendering of the Latin Vulgate *qui mittendus est*, 'who is to be sent.' The translator seems to have read in his copy שִׁלְחָה or שִׁלְחָה; a *Heth* for a *He*: and this reading was preferred by Helvicius, Grotius, and some others; but is now generally given up, even by the Roman Catholic interpreters."

*Ged. Crit. Rom. p. 144, on Gen. xlix. 10.*

The Abbé Le Pluche remarks on this passage, in his incomparable treatise, "The staff, or sceptre, *Scevet* (whence the *Sceplos* and *Sceptra* of the Greeks, and the *Scipio* of the Latins) is a vague term, whose meaning varies according to the quality of the person that wears it. In the hand of an old man or of a traveller, it is a staff either of support or defence. (2 Sam. xxviii. 21.) It is a hook in the hand of a shepherd. (Psal. xxiii. 4, *Hebr.*) In the hand of a provoked master who beats his slave, it is an instrument of wrath. (Prov. xxiii. 13.) In the hand of a King, it is the mark of his sovereignty. (Ps. xlv. 7, *Hebr.*) Finally, it is a *Staff of Honour*, a mark of distinction, in the hand of a Chief of a Family, or of an Inspector who makes the lists and the reviews. The kind of staff *here* meant must be determined by the quality of him who wears it. He is named in the other part of the verse: it is a chief of a family, an inspector, a man who has an authority in the family who presides over the council of the tribe, who makes the enumeration and the list of it. (*Mehokek*.) This last term is very well known in the scriptures, and signifies properly a man invested with a dignity or post, who keeps a list of those under him. The chiefs of the troops that came to the assistance of the people of God against Sisera, are called by that name. (Judg. v. 14.) The first men of Israel came to a ceremony with their chief, or their leader at their head. (*Mehokek*. Num. xxi. 18.)"

"But was it a custom for those chiefs, or men in post, for the maintaining of polity, to wear a staff of honour for distinction's sake? Nothing can be more certain. Deborah congratulates the chiefs of the families of Machir, or of the half-tribe of Manasses, on the other side of Jordan, and the commandments of Zebulon, who came to the assistance of Baruc, at the head of their troops, and having in hand the staff of inspector; or the sceptre that characterized the officer charged with the inspection of the enumeration (*be Scevet sophier.*) *cum baculo numerantis, or censentis populos.* Judg. v. 14. Every one knows what a precious treasure the discovery of a well in the deserts of Arabia is. God having showed to Moses a well of spring-water (Num. xxi. 17 and 18,) the digging of it was made with great joy and apparatus. The Israelites on the occasion of this public jubilation sung the following words: 'May the waters of this well rise! Sing the happy discovery of this well, which the chiefs of Israel caused to be digged, and at the opening of which the principals of the people have been present, with their leader at their head, and bearing their staves of honour.' *Cum præside, (Mehokek) et cum baculis suis.*"

"There remains but a short explanation more to give of the word *Shiloh*, which, (as it was translated by the author of the *Biblia Vulgata*.) signifies *The Envoy*, and which being interpreted as it is universally read in the Hebrew, according to the Old Samaritan text, signified, *the Pacifick, the Mediator of peace.* Being taken in this last sense, it comes from the word *Shalah*, from which the Latins derived the words *salus* and *salvus*." Accordingly, this writer applies the passage to the Messiah, who, he says, "is sufficiently recognisable by the concurrence of his three most remarkable characteristics, *viz.* of receiving the homage of his brethren, of subduing nations that are his enemies, and of borrowing the greatest lustre and testimony from the duration of his own tribe up to the time when he comes to receive the adorations and obedience of the Gentiles. Does his story show us any man reuniting these characters in himself? The whole is completely fulfilled, in *Jesus* the son of Mary, born at Bethlehem, in the time of the Emperor Augustus." Accordingly, he proceeds to demonstrate the way in which these leading features apply to him, and in which they can apply to him only.

*Abbé Le Pluche's Truth of the Gospel demonstrated, vol. i. p. 151—155, passim.*

On all the preceding points is a most elaborate and excellent dissertation in *Saurin's Discours Historiques, &c. sur la Bible. Disc. xli.*

Respecting the fertility of the lot of Judah, exhibited under so much beautiful imagery in the predictions of the dying patriarch, many writers expatiate in the most satisfactory and attractive language. In *Anc. Univ. Hist.* it is said, "Judah's lot did exactly answer this prediction, it was a fertile land, full of vineyards, fruit-trees, and

noble pasture-ground for cattle. It was in this tribe that the valley of Eshcol, or the brook of the Grape, was, a bunch of which was brought by two of the spies whom Moses sent to search the land, as a specimen of the richness of the soil: here was likewise the brook or torrent of that name, along whose banks were the most delicious pasture-grounds: and some travellers assure us that there are still very large grapes to be met with in the valley of Hebron, which may be probably that along which that torrent runs."

*Anc. Univ. Hist. b. i. c. 7, p. 488, vol. ii. Dublin edit. of 1745.*

General fertility was the characteristic of Canaan, and some vestiges of it still remain; sufficient to justify the representations of the patriarch on this point, as well respecting Judah, as afterwards respecting Naphtali and Issachar. The travels of Dr. Shaw are very full, and very satisfactory on this subject; and many extracts from them might be made to great advantage, but that the notes to this Lecture are already greatly extended; and that to quotations in support of a fact to which so many and so striking evidences remain, there would be no end. Yet the present appearance of the promised land, which is in many instances rocky and barren, not only destitute of fertility, but apparently hostile to cultivation, has led some skeptical writers to conclude, that the descriptions given of it as a country so abundantly rich and fertile, could be never applicable to the spot. Two answers may be given to this bold assertion. The first, that the country is not so universally barren, but that places remain sufficiently fertile still, to render probable all that has been said in the sacred writings respecting it; and to lead us to conclude that in other cases the whole face of the country has been changed. Dr. Shaw says, that "the mountains of the country abound with shrubs and a delicate short grass, both which the cattle are more fond of, than of such plants as are common to fallow grounds and meadows." The second answer to this objection is, that, granting the entire change of the general appearance of the country from fertility to barrenness, in this very point consists one grand evidence of the truth and accomplishment of Scripture Prophecy, which, while it spake of the richness and fertility of the country at the moment, declared that so barren and so incapable of cultivation should it become, on account of the "wickedness" of them who "dwelt therein."

Dr. Geddes cannot help allowing the exact accomplishment of the whole language of this chapter in the future lot of the tribes: so that he supposes it written subsequently to the partition of the land. As this is a stale objection, as old as Porphyry, relative to other predictions; so easy to make, and so uncandid, unless supported by evidence; I will not tire the patience of the reader by entering into its refutation. He may find some satisfactory account of this prophecy, however, in the treatise of Abbé Le Pluche, already referred to; and he will trace in the opinion of Dr. Geddes, the often-convicted arts of skepticism, to endeavour to bring into suspicion the authenticity of that portion of inspiration (be it what it may) which it is utterly unable to refute, or even plausibly to repel.—Such a mode of assault, upon the objections brought against her, Christianity disallows on the part of her champions—and should they attempt it, her principles would all rise in their condemnation, and her friends indignantly exclaim "*non tali auxilio!*"



## LECTURE V.

## THE CHARACTER AND PROPHECIES OF BALAAM.

NUMB. XXIII. 7—10, AND 18—24.

And he took up his parable, and said—Balak the King of Moab hath brought me from Aram, out of the mountains of the East, saying, Come, curse me Jacob, and come, defy Israel. How shall I curse whom God hath not cursed? or how shall I defy whom the Lord hath not defied? For from the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him: lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations. Who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number of the fourth part of Israel? Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!—And he took up his parable, and said, Rise up, Balak, and hear, hearken unto me, thou son of Zippor. God is not a man, that he should lie, neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good? Behold, I have received commandment to bless, and he hath blessed, and I cannot reverse it. He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel: the Lord his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them. God brought them out of Egypt; he hath as it were the strength of a unicorn. Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel: according to this time it shall be said, What hath God wrought! Behold, the people shall rise up as a great lion, and lift up himself as a young lion: he shall not lie down, until he eat of the prey, and drink the blood of the slain.

TRANSPORTED to the bosom of former ages, we converse with men upon whose ashes we trample; and we receive in tranquillity, useful information which they dearly purchased from experience. Looking into the world, we see only the ravages of time. Here and there, a mouldering heap, a crumbling pillar, a shattered mausoleum, covers the turf which pillows the head of a patriarch, marks the spot where Rachel lies, or distinguishes the repository of a monarch's dust. But when we consult sacred history, from these dry bones, what a vast army springs up! The grave resigns its captives; these dead men live; and while we contemplate their actions, we are made acquainted with their character. Not only the righteous are held in everlasting remembrance, but upon those pages which time cannot obliterate, the profane are condemned to perpetual notoriety, and the vicious are transmitted through all generations, objects of disgust, contempt, and aversion. Happy had it been for their memory, had their names been struck from those annals of fame, in which so many co-

vet to stand: and still more happy for themselves, could those actions which excite the just abhorrence of posterity, be blotted out of the records of heaven, and erased from the book of God's remembrance. But as it respects their eternal destiny the decree is passed; and it was necessary, for the instruction and admonition of the world, that the same pages which exhibit the attractions of faith and of purity, in the examples of an Enoch, Abraham, and a Daniel, should discover the deformity of malice, of avarice, and of unrighteousness, in the character of a Cain, a Laban, and a Balaam.

Time drops a veil, as he passes, over men and things. In proportion as nations or individuals are removed from us, the cloud thickens upon their history. The sacred writers have rescued some personages from utter oblivion: but they reveal only so much of their character, of their family, or of their life, as stands immediately connected with the purposes of the narrative, and is essentially necessary to our instruction. The father of Balaam is known to us only by name. Balaam himself would have lived and died unknown; the soothsayer and his arts had perished with the wreck of former years; but that his depravity raised him to reproachful notice, and fixed upon his character the stain of eternal ignominy. His country was Mesopotamia; or, as it is here called, Aram; and his residence Pethor, rising on the banks of the Euphrates. Among the "mountains of the East," and adjacent plains, *astronomy* was early cultivated; and the serenity of the atmosphere was peculiarly favourable to the prosecution of this sublime science. Talents are often prostituted; learning is frequently abused; and, in connexion with laudable pursuits, not uncommonly is found the vain desire of exceeding the limits which God has prescribed to human researches. Beyond a certain point curiosity becomes criminal; and inquiry is presumption. Superstition also occasionally encroaches upon the province of esteem for high talent; and credulity is the victim of unprincipled cunning. Literature is degraded by the pretensions of ignorance and of artifice, which are often found blended, and which strive to force themselves into an unnatural alliance with her. From the pure and exalted principles of astronomy in the hands of artful men, an occasion was found to invent the absurd system of *astrology*; or the profession of reading futurity in the face of the heavens from the configurations of the planets, and of foretelling the fates of nations or of individuals by nice and curious calculations. These "star-gazers" have been sufficiently exposed in the prophecies of Isaiah; and more enlightened ages have held them in merited derision. But at the time in which Balaam lived it was an easy method of extorting wealth; because credulity assigned to this profession, more extensive researches, than to real science: and while the pretension was un-

worthy the talents, it well accorded with the character of Balaam. Possessed of extraordinary powers, a cultivated understanding, and exalted sentiments, he sacrificed all that was great, and noble, and good, at the shrine of mammon; and while he pronounced the eulogy, and desired the death, of the righteous, he consented to live a life of impiety, and received "the wages of unrighteousness." A man so corrupted by the inordinate love of money, so degraded in principle by this vile passion, would not scruple to impose upon others, and to avail himself of their weakness to promote his own interest; especially, as it will be seen hereafter, that ambition shared the spoil with avarice, and that honours were occasionally connected with rewards.

He was, then, a soothsayer—and his dexterity, united with unquestionable ability, diffused universally his reputation, and finally attracted the serious notice of Balak, king of Moab. At the period to which we refer, Israel was encamped upon the borders of this monarch's territories. The renown of this people had scattered terror and astonishment on every side: the miracles wrought in their favour were well known and well authenticated: their armies were formidable, both for force and for number; and they covered the face of the country. The presence of God, in proportion as it inspired their troops with courage, blasted the energies of their adversaries. The iniquity of the Canaanites was now full. The balance, suspended for ages over their head, now rolled upon its axis, and showed that they were weighed and found wanting. While the strength of these nations melted before the descendants of Abraham, the princes of Moab and of Midian beheld the impending danger, were involved in the common calamity, participated the universal terror, and were "sore afraid of the people." In this extremity, Balak recollected the renowned oracle of Mesopotamia. Enslaved by the superstition of the age, and sensible of his physical inability to contend with his enemies, he imagined that the power which could not be resisted by human prowess, might perhaps wither under the influence of Balaam's enchantments.

A joint embassy is despatched to Pethor, with suitable rewards: and the urgency of the case is stated to the crafty diviner; with liberal promises of future recompense and distinction. The message of these princes was equally calculated to gratify his avarice and to flatter his vanity. To the profusion of wealth, were added the allurements of praise; and while the money glittered in his sight, his ear drank the soothing voice of adulation: "I know that he whom thou blessest, is blessed; and he whom thou cursest, is cursed." What heart could safely parley with such powerful besiegers? and



what bosom so feebly fortified against their combined assault as that of Balaam?

But he must maintain the mystery of imposing form: all the pomp of circumstance was employed; and he refused to give his answer till he had consulted God, upon a subject respecting which his mind was already made up. The air of secrecy which he assumed when he affected, amidst the shadows of the night, to inquire the divine mind, was eminently calculated to impress their superstitious imagination with awe and veneration. Mysterious appearances have been alike successfully employed, to strengthen the dominion of ignorance and credulity, by heathen and papal contrivance. Under the former ages of darkness in the pagan world, the system of idolatry was supported by mysteries which the common people were not allowed to penetrate; and the same powerful engine defended the absurdities of a church, whose fundamental maxim it was, that "ignorance is the mother of devotion." Truth never shrinks from examination—falsehood always: truth never can lose by trial—but falsehood cannot be brought to the test of reason and escape detection. In both cases, when these concealments were disclosed, when the dark recesses of hypocrisy were laid open to the day, priestcraft fell to the ground, the loveliness of pure religion was acknowledged, Christianity triumphed, Superstition "fled murmuring, and with her fled the shades of night." Balaam was too crafty to neglect so powerful a weapon; and having dismissed his noble visitors to rest, with the pretension of asking the permission of God, he left the intimation to produce its full effect upon their mind in secret, and himself retired to repose.—To repose, as he thought: for it does not appear from the history, that he either consulted God, or had any such intention.

It is night. The sun enlightens another hemisphere. The moon leads forth the hosts of heaven: her beams tremble on the water; and her testimony to the power and wisdom of God is given in silence. All nature sleeps. The murmur of merchandise ceases. The noise of business, and the voice of riot are hushed. The gates of the city are closed. Man has resigned his cares and his pleasures to temporary oblivion: his senses are locked up in repose; and the image of death is impressed upon his countenance. All sleep but the wicked prophet. Avarice permits him not to close his eyes: or if slumber surprise him, it cannot sooth him into forgetfulness. His imagination is at work upon the materials of the day. He sees the princes of Moab again opening their treasures, and pouring them forth at his feet. He is transported to the court of the monarch himself, and receives robes of distinction, and titles of

dignity. He grasps the gold which he pursues; and curses the people against whom he is employed. But while his fancy is thus engaged, a voice is heard which chases these visions, which agitates and oppresses him, which raises his hair with terror, and rouses him from his guilty dreams. It is the voice of God; and it addresses him in terms of authority which will admit no subterfuges. "And God said, What men are these with thee?" O wretched man, thine enemy hath found thee! and he asks not for information, but to condemn thee out of thine own mouth! Unable to deceive, he is compelled to declare all, and the truth is circumstantially related. That which he pretended to the embassy of Moab and Midian to seek, he finds unsought, and undesired. The will of God is announced to him, in a positive prohibition—"Thou shalt *not* go!"— This sentence disperses all his anticipations, of distinction, and all his hopes of gain.

We may easily imagine with what feelings he would pass the remainder of the night. After such a visit, darkness and solitude would be terrible to him: repose was impossible; and he would wish with impatience to see the "eyelids of the morning" unclosed. But the first ray of light that appeared would renew his anguish; and the necessity of announcing his disappointment cover him with confusion. So soon as it was day he dismissed the messengers to bear an account of the divine prohibition to their master. As they only said to the king, "Balaam refuseth to come with us," it was natural that he should conclude from the complexion of the enchanter's character, that he did not think the proposals of Balak sufficiently liberal. Under this impression a second embassy was despatched, composed of persons yet more noble, with a message couched in terms still more urgent, and with an unlimited prospect of recompense. He was solicited to name his own conditions; and the king said by his messengers, "I will do whatsoever thou sayest unto me."

Flattering terms!—but the recollection of the night-vision still haunts the conscience of Balaam. For a moment, a purer principle than that which was the grand spring of his usual operations, acquires the ascendancy: and he said, "If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord my God, to do less or more." Happy had it been for him if this principle had continued to prevail: if his intercourse with the enemies of God had here ceased; and if the love of money had perished under the conviction of his allegiance to his Maker. But the impression was momentary. The balance had all along leaned on the side of the world; the finger of God had touched it, and the

scale preponderated for the instant in favour of Heaven; but no sooner was the propelling force withdrawn, than the beam turned, and it fell back to its original declination. Well has it been said, "the love of money is the root of all evil." Every law is broken, every duty neglected, every sacred obligation violated, to gratify its insatiable cravings. Other vices are temporary—the strongest passions are controlled, subdued, and destroyed by time. Other sins are limited to certain seasons of life, and frequently lose their force and influence as the man grows older. The fire which consumes the young, has a boundary placed to its raging, and is extinguished by age. Follies become corrected by experience; and wisdom is taught by the "multitude of days." But avarice cleaves closer to the heart as years advance: its influence is increased by time: it lives amid the snows of life, when every emotion besides itself is frozen; and it quickens the pulsations of a heart dead to every other passion. The canker that devoured the strength of the youth, and chased the bloom of his cheek, eats into the tranquillity of age, and adds wrinkles of care to the traces drawn upon the countenance by the hand of time.

Again the heart of Balaam gives way; and he tampers with temptation till it destroys him. The positive prohibition which he had received is neglected; and he vainly hopes a repeal of the divine commandment. Night returns, the sun is faithful to his going down; and the very advances of the evening ought to have been a check to "the madness of the prophet." Deaf as he was to the still voice of nature, declaring the divine immutability! Could he hope a revolution in His purpose who gives the day and the night in the remembrance of a promise once pronounced? But avarice appears in this instance to have veiled even his understanding. A second visit from God, however, grants him permission to go! But, what a permission! the prohibition was an act of friendship: the permission is an act of indignation. The prohibition was evidently given him at his peril. It resembles the ease allowed to Ephraim—"He is joined to idols, *let him alone.*" Balaam is found perverse, and he is given over to his own heart's lusts. The spirit of the language is—"Go—and take the consequences: but although you carry your point here—I will yet be obeyed—the word which I shall say unto thee, that shalt thou do." Chasten me, O God, according to thy wisdom; control my passions, and refuse my desires, whenever they displease thee, and in whatever way shall seem good in thy sight—but never curse me with such a permission, nor resign me to the dominion of my own devices!

Behold him eager to set out on this perilous journey. He rises



early in the morning: and exhibits an alacrity seldom manifested by those who profess to obey nobler principles. The princes of Moab advance before him to apprize the king of the success of their mission, and to prepare the court for his approach. Balaam is left to pursue his way unattended except by his two servants—is left to solitude and meditation. I do not envy him his situation. Retirement is desirable only when a man is in alliance with heaven, and at peace with his own conscience. He could not be so absorbed in the anticipation of future distinction, as altogether to blot the past from his recollection; or to forget the slender permission on which he was pursuing a journey avowedly hostile to the purpose and the pleasure of God. Before he finally seals his decision, and sells his hopes of heaven for the present evil world, mercy affords him one more warning. The angel of the Lord withstood him in the way: the eyes of the prophet were holden that he should not see him; and the dull beast upon which he rode was made the organ of reproof to her intelligent master. Three times the animal turned aside; and goaded on by repeated strokes of violence, twice the celestial messenger gave way before him. At length the tongue of the brute was loosened; and the eyes of Balaam were opened.

It is certainly proper to pause one moment, to consider this very singular piece of history. A variety of interpretations have been offered, with a view to explain the event without supposing a miracle: and some have imagined it to have been a transaction altogether visionary. It appears to me, that this circumstance is to be received as a fact, or relinquished altogether. In the history of Moses, there is nothing upon which the hypothesis of a vision can be founded with any degree of plausibility: and should any doubt remain whether it should be regarded as literally taking place, I think it must yield to the express testimony of Peter; who says, that “the dumb ass, speaking with man’s voice, forbade the madness of the prophet.” It will not be denied, that he who made man’s mouth, was equal to the performance ascribed to him; and that he could cause the organs of a dumb brute to articulate. It does not appear less credible than a variety of miracles, distinctly affirmed and largely supported in the Scriptures. It is not for a finite capacity to arraign the actions, to fathom the purposes, or to perceive the designs, of an infinite, independent, omnipotent Agent: nor does it become us to limit the one, or to judge the other. The question to-night simply is, whether we will receive the miracle as a plain matter of fact, upon the testimony of the Scriptures? or whether we will reject it without the slightest possible power, or evidence from any quarter, to disprove it?—

and even when the most rigid skeptic must allow it to be possible? Take into the account that the largest proportion of Scripture history, and of this very part of Scripture history, is supported by irresistible evidences; evidences resulting from internal excellence, and from external confirmation. Neither is this very fact altogether without its parallel in heathen writings; the fables of which probably originated in some vague tradition of this event. Human feelings, and a human voice are ascribed to animals in more instances than one.\* Saurin has supposed, with great probability, that the difficulty consists in the *conciseness* of the narrative, and that there were circumstances, which, if known to us, would meet the objection.

After being again reproved for his obstinacy and wickedness; again told that his way is perverse before God; and again admonished strictly to adhere to the word of prophecy which should be delivered to him—he is permitted to pursue his own plan, and to proceed on his journey.

As the character of Balaam may be gathered from the history which has passed before you, we shall not notice the meeting between the king of Moab, and the guest whom he coveted, but shall lead you to him on the top of the mountain, from which, after one night's repose, he saw the tents of Israel with sorrow and with envy. The ceremony of rearing seven altars, and the external pomp of religion, we may consider as designed more to excite reverence toward himself, than to honour God: they resemble the retirement which he affected, under the pretence of seeking the mind of Deity, when the first messengers of Balak came to Mesopotamia; and it even appears, after all that passed, (enough one should have imagined to have daunted the strongest courage,) that he ventured to practise his wretched arts upon this awful occasion, and to seek for enchantments." The whole that we have contemplated presents a mortifying picture of human nature, unrenowned, even when adorned with the most illustrious talents. We turn with disgust from a character in which we see only the most exalted powers debased to the vilest purposes, to listen to the burst of eloquence, read at the commencement of this service, and which fell from the lips that could "charm so wisely."

Behold him, then, retiring to a solitary place to receive a command which he dared not to disobey, but which he had reason to believe must defeat his projects. "And God met him." The welfare of Israel, and not the altars of Balaam, attracted his regard. Without deigning to notice the last, he secures the former, and

\* The ass of Silenus: the ram of Phryxus: the bull of Europa: the lamb in Egypt in the reign of Boccharis: the elephant of Porus: the horses of Achilles and Adrastus. See Anc. Univ. Hist. vol. ii. b. i. c. 3, note 1. Saurin's Discours, tom. 1. Disc. I. XIV. p. 509, &c. Also, note 1, at the end.

makes the mortified prophet the instrument of announcing it. The tongue of the ass was not more completely under the control of God than the tongue of Balaam: and while his heart was full of cursing and bitterness, his lips scattered only blessings and privileges. "And he took up his parable, and said—Balak the king of Moab hath brought me from Aram out of the mountains of the East, saying, Come, curse mè Jacob, and come, defy Israel. How shall I curse whom God hath not cursed? or how shall I defy whom the Lord hath not defied? For from the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him: lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations. Who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number of the fourth part of Israel? Let me die the death of the righteous: and let my last end be like his!"

There are four leading points in this impressive language. The security—the separation—and the increase of Israel—connected with a desire of personal interest in their privileges.

1. Their security is asserted. "*How shall I curse whom God hath not cursed? or how shall I defy whom the Lord hath not defied?*" This indirect mode of speaking, is nevertheless an absolute declaration in their favour—God hath *not* cursed—God hath *not* defied: and the inference was established by facts—that the imprecation and the efforts of their most powerful adversaries were nugatory. Moab cursed and defied without effect. Midian united with Moab, but it was still in vain. Recourse was then had to other arts and to other agents; and Balaam was allured from his retreat among "the mountains of the east:" but when he arrived he could do nothing. Balak said,—"Curse"—A greater than Balak said, 'Thou shalt not curse!' The power that secured the interests of Israel, surrounds the church of God to this hour, and maintains the Christian life unhurt amid ten thousand ills perpetually rising. The same voice that over-ruled the purposes of the soothsayer, encourages the meanest disciple, and says—"No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that riseth in judgment against thee, thou shalt condemn."

2. Their separation from all the world is foretold. "*Lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations.*" A more extraordinary prophecy has never been delivered; and a more complete accomplishment of any prediction could not be desired, than that which is furnished, relative to this, every day. While they were an empire, they were separated from the whole world, by their laws, by their customs, and by their religion. Living in the centre of the three continents that were anciently inhabited,"\* they had little intercourse with the nations by whom they were surrounded, and less

\* Le Pluche. See note 2, at the end.



assimilation to their manners. And since their dispersion over the whole earth, for their rejection of the Messiah, their distinction has been preserved: and while the fulfilment of the prophecy has been no less complete, it is still more miraculous than when they were collected. It is thus also that the church of God is preserved, although scattered to the east and to the west, the north and the south. Thus the Christian is required to be separated from an ungodly world. Thus Revelation lives uninjured by every attack. The lamp is placed on the top of the mountain, and neither the damps of time can impair its lustre, nor the blasts of persecution extinguish its glory: it throws its trembling light around, and the powers of darkness, who hate its beams, cannot hide them, because the hand that kindled, perpetuates its flame.

3. Their increase is predicted. "*Who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number of the fourth part of Israel?*" The promise of God to Abraham was—"I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand upon the sea-shore, and they shall possess the gate of their enemies." This blessing, after the lapse of many years, was re-echoed and confirmed by Balaam. In the days of Solomon, the meridian of their prosperity as a nation, the prediction was amply verified. And to this hour, reduced as they are in point of external dignity, they are a numerous, as well as a separated people. Thus is it also with the spiritual children of Abraham's Son and Lord. We can form no just calculation of their increase and multitude. The grave hides the larger proportion of them. Those that are alive and remain, lie at all points of the compass. But in the day of their general assembly, they shall prove "a great multitude which no man can number, gathered out of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues." Israel, and the Gentiles admitted to Israel's privileges, shall meet in the same world; and "there shall be one fold, and one Shepherd." The envious eye of Balaam again shall see, and again shall curse, them: he shall suffer the evil that he preferred, and languish for ever without the good that he despised.

4. He desired a personal interest in their privileges. A tribute to their felicity is extorted from the reluctant lips of this wicked man. "*Let me die the death of the righteous; and let my last end be like his.*" An *end* is acknowledged; and the prospect of it mars all his hopes, disturbs all his feelings, destroys all his dreams. For once conscience speaks out. The visions of futurity fill him with terror. He sees the sun-shine of peace resting upon the "*last end*" of the "righteous;" and his own dying moments rise before him covered with all the agony of remorse. Their death, not their life, attracted his desires: and rather than relinquish the follies of time, he dared the punish-

ments of eternity. Sad picture of the fatal resolution of thousands! They acknowledge the loveliness of piety, they trace its efficacy, they envy the believer's triumph over the last adversary, they feel that they have no consolation to alleviate the bitterness of death, they form the wish and pronounce the prayer of Balaam: but, like him, continue to cleave to the world, like him they admire, but do not imitate, like him they struggle to silence the clamours of conscience, like him they sow vanity, and like him they shall reap despair.

We pass on to the second parable of this singular and distinguished character, the features of which exactly correspond with that which ushers in his eloquent predictions. This is also expressed in the same general terms, and relates to the same subject—Israel's prosperity. We shall not attempt to reduce his observations to system, nor to impose upon them arrangement: but shall pass over them as they are presented to us.

Ver. 18. "*And he took up his parable, and said, Rise up, Balak, and hear; and hearken unto me, thou son of Zippor.*" What an address to a monarch! When the Spirit of God is upon a man, all earthly distinctions fall to the ground. The time-serving Balaam, who could crouch for his interest, and could lick the dust before the foot of pride to gain a handful of wealth, would have been the last to trample upon human distinctions of his own will: but he is Balaam no longer—his tongue, his language, his actions, are all under the control of a superior power; and he speaks unwelcome truths, not because he chooses, but because he *must* speak them. He calls upon the proud man, from whom he expects his promotion, to rise and receive his message; he does not give him the evanescent titles of worldly majesty, but addresses him as a man; and instead of bowing at his feet, speaks in the high tone of a superior, because God speaks by him. And the reverence inculcated upon the king of Moab, surely befits the worshipping members of Christian assemblies. When Ehud said to Eglon, one of Balak's successors, "I have a message from God unto thee," the heathen monarch rose from his seat—and in similar circumstances, professing societies and individuals have received communications from the same exalted Being with comparative indifference. Attend to his words.

Ver. 19. "*God is not a man that he should lie, nor the son of man that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?*" Nor is he singular in this delineation of the Divine character. The same representation is made, and the same truths are preached, by the vivid and transient colours of the bow of the storm. When the cloud rolls by, sprinkling

the earth with showers, without rending its bosom and whelming with destruction the track over which it passes—it is in obedience to a covenant made and recorded early in the annals of time, that the waters should no more go over the earth to destroy it; and its testimony is, “God is not a man that he should lie, neither the son of man that he should repent.” When the sea rushes upon the shore and threatens to swallow it up, it stays its billows and curbs its raging at a certain point: because he who poured it from the hollow of his hand has appointed its boundaries and has said, “Hitherto shalt thou come, but no farther—and here shall thy proud waves be stayed;” and he is “not a man that he should lie, neither the son of man that he should repent.” The return of times and of seasons, of months and of years, is regulated by an ancient decree: “So long as the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.” Impressed by this prevailing and permanent law, the sun knoweth his going down, the moon her wane and her increase, the seasons their respective order. No one infringes the dominion of the other; or passes over his own determined limit. But these declare in the midst of their vicissitudes—“God is not a man that he should lie, neither the son of man that he should repent.” This immutability of God is finely contrasted with human instability. A “man” may “lie”—the “son of man” does “repent”—an “arm of flesh” will fail. He is frequently a compound of weakness and of wickedness. He speaks to deceive; and his heart derides what his tongue utters. He sacrifices truth to fashion, to convenience, to vain-glory. Perhaps he purposes at the time of his avowal what he promises: but he is “unstable as water.” Some whim obliterates the recollection of his engagement: some after-thought changes his purpose: some intervening circumstance obstructs his design; and the man that confides in his word is the victim of delusion. His best, his most sincere, his most benevolent wishes and intentions may fail for want of power. He possesses not the influence which he presumed that he held; or he falls from the greatness which he enjoyed; or he is arrested by the hand of death before his plans are accomplished. “Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help.”

Lean not on earth, 'twill pierce thee to the heart,  
A broken reed at best—but oft a spear!  
On its sharp point, peace bleeds, and hope expires!

But “God is not a man that he should lie, neither the son of man that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?” His immutabili-



ty is essential to his nature, and may alike be traced through his purposes, his promises, and his operations.

Ver. 20. "*Behold, I have received commandment to bless; and he hath blessed; and I cannot reverse it.*" Thus far we had seen nothing in the language of Balaam to betray the enmity of his heart against God: but here it rises to observation, and manifests itself, as in almost every instance, in which it is seen at all, against his cause and people. *I cannot reverse it*"—O mortification to his wishes! he clearly implies his intentions and expresses their defeat. "*I cannot reverse it*"—O triumph to Israel! neither human nor infernal power can prevail against those purposes of mercy, which heaven maintains for its children. "Surely," O God, "the wrath of man shall praise thee, and the remainder of that wrath, thou wilt restrain!"

Ver. 21. "*He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel; the Lord his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them.*" Was there, then, no "iniquity in Jacob?" and no "perverseness in Israel?" He that reads their history will find much of the former, and little besides the latter. Their journeyings from Egypt to the very point at which they were then arrived, had been distinguished by miracles, and yet disgraced by murmuring, and by unbelief, and by idolatry. But he covered their guilt, and forgave their transgressions. And thus, "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses to them." "He made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel."

The divine presence accompanied them: "the Lord his God is with him." And how much is included in this sentence! *Constant vigilance.* He that keepeth Israel will neither slumber nor sleep." *Constant protection.* "He will not suffer thy foot to be moved." *Constant direction.* The pillar of cloud by day, and of fire by night, the visible symbol of God's presence, always accompanied them: it marked their course, limited the extent of every journey, determined their resting-place, and prescribed the periods of their movements and of their repose. He led them by the right way to a city of habitation." *Constant supplies.* He "gave them of the corn of heaven; man did eat angels' food; and he sent them meat to the full." During their forty years' pilgrimage, their "raiment waxed not old upon them."

This presence is accompanied by tokens of majesty—"the shout of a king is among them." The visits of God were awful to Abra-

ham, to Jacob, and to Eliphaz. What then must be his perpetual presence? This constitutes the solemn, substantial felicity of heaven. And wherever it is now bestowed, it is powerfully felt. The fear of Jacob fell upon the inhabitants of the land where he sojourned. The house of Obededom prospered while the ark of God tarried with him. The nations melted before Israel. All these impressions are to be traced to the same source—the presence of God; and they are the footsteps of his majesty.

Ver. 22. *“God brought them out of Egypt; he hath as it were the strength of a unicorn.”* Had it been left to the choice of Balaam, he would gladly have drawn a veil over this part of their history: for the inference which Balak must draw from the fall of Pharoah, would be most distressing. “God brought them out of Egypt.”—This fact was the subject of a clear prediction; which received a full accomplishment in the event. “He brought them forth with a strong hand”—and the monuments of power and indignation which he left behind, perpetuated the remembrance of this singular interposition on behalf of the descendants of Abraham. The same power still encircled them: for it is added, “He hath as it were the strength of a unicorn.” By this term most naturalists understand the rhinoceros, an animal of prodigious force. God does not leave any work incomplete. He did not deliver Israel from Egypt, to desert them in the wilderness; and the issue of their wanderings may serve to point the Christian to the end of his faith: “being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in us, will carry it on till the day of Jesus Christ.”

Ver. 23. *“Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel: according to this time it shall be said of Jacob, and of Israel, What hath God wrought?”* It is pleasant to hear extorted from the mouths of the adversaries of God, a confession of their impotence, amid the plenitude of their malice. It is the more pleasing, because such confessions are not limited to any particular point, or confined to any particular person, but relate to every individual, and to every cause which God condescends to take under his protection. A Christian may be alarmed at the number and discipline of the armies that dispute his advancement towards heaven: but greater is He that is for him, than they that are against him. The mountains shall be levelled and the valleys exalted as he presses on. The arts of man, and the more pernicious wiles of Satan, shall be blasted by the thunder of his eternal Guardian. Balaam gathers this conclusion, so foreign to his wishes, not only from the inspiration of God,

but from a retrospection of "what God had wrought." Such a retrospect on the part of every pious character, would frequently remove the unfounded apprehensions which sometimes invade and distress the mind; and could not fail to put a song of gratitude into the mouth. Such a review must now of necessity be partial and circumscribed—of many parts of the Divine plans respecting ourselves we remain ignorant: many mercies we overlook; many interpositions we forget; but when from the summit of yonder hills of light we look back upon the way, by which we have been led, we shall join the shout of triumph raised by redeemed nations, and say—"What hath God wrought!"

Ver. 24. "*Behold, the people shall rise up as a great lion, and lift up himself as a young lion: he shall not lie down till he eat of the prey, and drink the blood of the slain.*" These beautiful and highly figurative expressions need no explanation, and admit of no comment. In language which cannot be misunderstood, and which it would be injury to alter, they speak of the victories, the power, and the glory of Israel. Their conquests in Canaan, and their triumphs before they reached that country, over the nations that disputed and obstructed their passage, sufficiently establish the prediction. While so many instances of their success are present to every recollection, enlargement is unnecessary: and while the accomplishment of the prophecy is so completely exhibited in their general history, it were futile to descend to the enumeration of particulars. I only detain you to contrast with these representations, authenticated beyond all doubt, in the former periods of time, by the prosperity of Abraham's descendants, their present desolate and affecting situation: and we shall leave the remaining predictions of Balaam to a future discussion. Are the wanderers, who meet us in every quarter of the globe, with the features of foreigners, whatever be the climate—who have not an empire, nor a home, nor a temple, nor a resting-place—are these the people of whom such distinguished blessings were foretold, and by whom they were actually enjoyed? But the glory is departed; and their Rock hath given them up—given them up, for a season, to the punishment of their iniquities, but not for ever. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee: how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings—and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate! Henceforth ye shall not see me, till ye say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!"



## NOTES.

## NOTES TO THE FIFTH LECTURE.

**NOTE 1.**—Respecting the speaking of Balaam's ass, in the preceding Lecture, it was said not to be without its counterpart in the heathen world. That the heathens sometimes imputed to their animals human feeling, and had a tradition that on some extraordinary occasions they had been known to speak, is evident from Homer. He represents the horses of Achilles lamenting the death of their master's friend, Patroclus.

Ἴπποι δ' Αἰακίδαο, μάχης ἀπάνευθεν ἑόντες,  
 Κλαῖον, ἐπεὶ δὴ πρῶτα πυθέσθην ἠϊόχοιο  
 Ἐν κονίῃσι πεσόντος ὕφ' Ἐκτορος ἀνδροφόνιοιο  
 Ἡ μὲν Αὐτομέδων, Διῶρεος ἄλκιμος υἱός,  
 Πολλὰ μὲν ἄρ' μάστιγι βοῇ ἐπαιμάετο θείνων,  
 Πολλὰ δὲ μείλιχίοισι προσηύδα, πολλὰ δ' ἄρειψ'  
 Τῷ δ' ἔτ' ἄψ' ἐπὶ νηας ἐπὶ πλατὺν Ἑλλησποντον  
 Ἡθέλετ' ἰέναι, ἔτ' ἐς πόλεμον μετ' Ἀχαιῶν·  
 Ἀλλ' ὥς τ' ἐπὶ μένει ἔμπεδον, ἣτ' ἐπὶ τύμβῳ  
 Ἀνέρος εἰσὶν κει τεινυότος, καὶ γυναικὸς·  
 Ὅς μὲν ὀσφάλεως περικαλλέα δίφρον ἔχοντες  
 Οὐδέι ἐνίσκηψαντε καρῆατα· δάκρυα δὲ σφιν  
 Θερμὰ κατὰ βλεφάρων χαμάδις ῥέε μυρομένοισιν,  
 Ἡϊόχοιο πόθῳ θαλερῇ δὲ μιαίνετο χαίτη,  
 Ζεύγλης ἐξερίπυσσα παρὰ ζυγὸν ἀμφοτέροισι.

*Hom. Il. lib. xvii. v. 426, &c. tom. ii. Foulis edit.*

Meantime at distance from the scene of blood,  
 The pensive steeds of great Achilles stood;  
 Their god-like master slain before their eyes,  
 They wept and shared in human miseries.  
 In vain Automedon now shakes the rein,  
 Now plies the lash, and soothes and threats in vain;  
 Nor to the fight, nor Hellespont they go,  
 Restiff they stood, and obstinate in wo;  
 Still as a tomb-stone, never to be mov'd,  
 On some good man, or woman unprov'd,  
 Lays its eternal weight; or fix'd as stands  
 A marble courser by the sculptor's hands,  
 Plac'd on the hero's grave. Along their face,  
 The big round drops cours'd down with silent pace,  
 Conglobing on the dust. Their manes, that late  
 Circled their arched necks, and wav'd in state,  
 Trail'd on the dust beneath the yoke were spread,  
 And prone to earth was hung their languid head.

*Pope's Hom. Il. b. xvii. v. 484, &c. vol. iii.*

His horse speaks when Achilles reproaches him with the death of Patroclus.

Τὸν δ' ἄρ' ὑπὸ ζυγῶφιν προσέφη πόδας αἰόλος ἵππος  
 Ζάνθος, ἄφαρ δ' ἤμυσσε καρῆατι, πᾶσα δὲ χαίτη,  
 Σεύγλης ἐξερίπυσσα παρὰ ζυγὸν, ἔδας ἵκανε·  
 Αὐθιγὰ δὲ θεὰ λευκώλενος Ἥρη.

*Hom. Il. tom. ii. lib. xix. v. 405, &c. Foul. edit.*

The generous Xanthus, as the words he said,  
Seem'd sensible of wo, and droop'd his head,  
Trembling he stood before the golden wain,  
And bow'd to dust the honours of his mane.  
When, strange to tell! (so Juno will'd) he broke  
Eternal silence, and portentous spoke.

*Pope's Hom. II. b. xix. vol. iv. l. 446, &c.*

Then follows a prediction uttered by the horse relative to the death of his master Achilles. Homer takes care to inform us that (as we may suppose this the first time he ever spoke, so) he never spoke again.

Ὡς αἶψα φωνήσαντος Εἰρινύες ἔσχεθον αὐδῆν.

*V. 419.*

Then ceas'd for ever, by the Furies ty'd,  
His fateful voice—

*l. 464, &c.*

Bishop Newton has very justly stated the application to be made of these and similar traditions in the heathen world. "The proper use of citing such authorities is not to prove, that those instances, and this of Balaam, are upon an equal footing, and equally true; but only to prove, that the Gentiles believed such things to be true, and to lie within the power of their gods; and, consequently, could not object to the truth of Scripture history on this account." And he founds this argument not merely upon this tradition by Homer, but upon the testimony of "the gravest historians, such as Livy, and Plutarch, who frequently affirm that oxen have spoken." Saurin makes the same use of the same traditions, and reasons upon them in a corresponding strain. But I cannot withhold from you six principles upon which he illustrates the mission and employment of Balaam.

1. "Notwithstanding that the descendants of Abraham did form, some ages after that patriarch, the only nation that God owned, and to whom he committed his oracles, there were other worshippers of the true God throughout the world before the conquest of the promised land." He instances Job and his friends, Jethro and his family, &c.

2. "The worship of God was frequently mixed with superstition and idolatry, even among them who professed to adore the one God of heaven and earth. The teraphim of Laban prove this."

3. "This odious mixture did not hinder God from revealing himself to those who practised such a monstrous and motley religion—nay, he sometimes even revealed himself to professed idolaters: Abimelech and Nebuchadnezzar are instances of this kind of revelation."

4. "It was an opinion maintained among the Gentiles, that prophets and diviners were able to send plagues among the people"—that "the heathen were wont to devote to perdition those against whom they waged war;" and he quotes, as an evidence, the form of imprecations made on such occasions from Macrobius."

*Saturnal. lib. 3. cap. 9.*

5. "Supernatural gifts in general, and those of prophecy in particular, did, indeed, enlighten the minds of the prophets, but did not always sanctify their hearts."

6. "The greatest wickednesses, and human weaknesses of the prophets, never went so far as to make them pronounce oracles contrary to what was dictated by the Holy Ghost."

*Saur. Discours, &c. sur la Bible, tome i. Disc. lxiv. p. 506, 507. Folio, edit. a la Haye, 1728.*

The application of these principles to the History, the Mission, and the Predictions of Balaam throughout, will throw considerable light upon the subject.

NOTE 2.—Le Pluche thus reasons respecting the favourable situation of that country to which the oracles of God were committed, for their general dissemi-

nation. He says—"The nation, keeper of the archives of mankind, was placed in Palestine, on the banks of the river Jordan, and along the Mediterranean; that is, in the exact centre of the three continents that were anciently inhabited. The Africans could not go out of Suez, their only passage between the Red Sea and the Mediterranean to enter into Arabia, without making Palestine in their way. The Arabians coming out of their deserts met the river Jordan. When the Europeans were at the end of their longest courses on the Mediterranean, they arrived in Greater Asia, upon the confines of Palestine. The Persians and the eastern nations could not pass the Euphrates, and visit the provinces of the west and the south, without coming into the countries near Syria and Palestine." Such were the geographical facilities for universal extension presented to religious truth, in respect of the locality of the Jews connected with all other nations. He goes on to discover how circumstances paved the way for its diffusion. "The place where the depositum remained was accessible to all the universe: but the nation intrusted with it, was not showed to the rest of the world but with some reserve, and in the proper time. We shall not be long without seeing the reasons that caused it to remain for a great while concealed, as it were, and in a state of separation. This economy lasted to the time when the fulfilling of the promises was near at hand. Then the Jews, already known by several instances of the protection of God, and even dreaded on that account by the Egyptians, the Syrians, and the Babylonians, began to have correspondences with other nations. Several Israelitish families were, by compulsion, dispersed, towards the river Araxes, along the Thermodoon, and in other places in the north. Many Jewish families voluntarily settled in Alexandria and Cyrene, at Damas and Antioch, at Tarsus and Thessalonica, at Rome, and a great many other places. Their books translated from the Hebrew into the Greek, by degrees spread the knowledge of the promises made to Abraham, the Head of the Jewish nation. The East and the West began to publish that the Deliverer and Master of all nations was to come out of that one in particular: and this hope was universally divulged—*percrebuerat rumor*. Tacitus and Suetonius are our authorities for it. It is true, they apply that prophecy to Vespasian and Titus, in the same manner as Virgil had applied it to one of Livia's children, who was designed to succeed Augustus; but this attribution, though arbitrary, and made by interpreters, who, for certain, were very badly informed, yet supposes the expectation of a change in the state of mankind, which was to proceed from the Jewish nation—*ut ex Judæa profecti rerum potirentur*."

*Abbé Le Pluche's Truth of the Gospel demonstrated, vol. i. p. 99—101.*

In the midst of all this—and in defiance of that universal dispersion which is now made of them among all nations, their distinction is preserved, according to Balaam's prediction, and the representations made in page 99 of the preceding Lecture, to which this Note refers.



## LECTURE VI.

## THE PROPHECIES OF BALAAM CONTINUED AND CONCLUDED.

NUM. XXIV. 1—9; AND 15—24.

And when Balaam saw that it pleased the Lord to bless Israel, he went not as at other times to seek for enchantments, but he set his face toward the wilderness. And Balaam lifted up his eyes, and he saw Israel abiding in his tents according to their tribes, and the Spirit of God came upon him. And he took up his parable, and said, Balaam the son of Beor hath said, and the man whose eyes are open hath said; he hath said, which heard the words of God, which saw the vision of the Almighty falling into a trance, but having his eyes open: How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel! As the valleys are they spread forth; as gardens by the river's side; as the trees of lign-aloes which the Lord hath planted; and as cedar trees beside the waters. He shall pour the water out of his buckets, and his seed shall be in many waters, and his king shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted. God brought him forth out of Egypt, he hath as it were the strength of a unicorn: he shall eat up the nations his enemies, and shall break their bones, and pierce them through with his arrows. He couched, he lay down as a lion, and as a great lion: who shall stir him up? Blessed is he that blesseth thee, and cursed is he that curseth thee!——And he took up his parable, and said, Balaam the son of Beor hath said, and the man whose eyes are open hath said: He hath said, which heard the words of God, and knew the knowledge of the Most High, which saw the vision of the Almighty falling into a trance, but having his eyes open: I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth. And Edom shall be a possession, Seir also shall be a possession for his enemies, and Israel shall do valiantly. Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion, and shall destroy him that remaineth of the city. And when he looked on Amalek, he took up his parable, and said, Amalek was the first of the nations, but his latter end shall be that he perish for ever. And he looked on the Kenites, and took up his parable, and said, Strong is thy dwelling-place, and thou putttest thy nest in a rock: nevertheless, the Kenite shall be wasted, until Asshur shall carry thee away captive. And he took up his parable, and said, Alas! who shall live when God doeth this! And ships shall come from the coasts of Chittim, and shall afflict Asshur, and shall afflict Eber, and he also shall perish for ever!

THE gifts and calling of God are without repentance. They sometimes ill accord, as we judge, with the character and the merits of their possessor; and Deity never acts more like a Sovereign than in the choice of instruments to perform his pleasure. When he determined to reveal his will respecting Israel, and to announce his purposes of mercy towards them, he did not to that end raise up an illustrious prophet from the midst of them; neither Moses, nor the seventy elders, upon whom the Spirit of God rested, were employed on this occasion: but an unprincipled soothsayer, who had sold his con-

science to the love of filthy lucre, is allured from his retreat by the combined attractions of avarice and of ambition, is engaged to withstand the people whom God determined to support, and is compelled out of his own mouth to frustrate the projects of those whom he designed to serve, to destroy his own hopes of distinction, to condemn his own character, and to counteract the most earnest desires of his heart.

Prophecy is beyond controversy, admitting its existence, the immediate gift of God. It is a gift of no common value and importance. One should have imagined that, in its communication, it would have been confined to men of the most distinguished piety, who had the most closely walked with the Divinity, and the most diligently sought his approbation. But who shall limit the Holy One of Israel? We discover this inestimable treasure, this evening, not merely in an earthen vessel, but a vessel self-dedicated to purposes of dishonour. We see it in the possession of a man (and, alas! it is not a solitary instance) who blended the finest talents and the foulest heart that ever met; and whose history is recorded at once to admonish and to humble us. It teaches us many affecting truths; and human life is full of sad confirmations of them. We have met in the world occasionally, as well as in these pages, the destructive union of vice and of intelligence. The character drawn in the connexion of this Lecture is calculated to command admiration and to excite disgust: to create tender interest and to force abhorrent indignation. Like leviathan, "he drinketh up a river at once"—he disdains a rivulet of knowledge, and exhausting its supplies, returns thirsty from the very fountain-head. He ascends the heavens, and explores its regions—he crosses the deep, and fathoms its recesses—he searches to the extremities of the earth: nothing is concealed from his scrutiny, nothing is impossible to his powers, nothing satisfies the cravings of his capacious understanding. His speech is eloquence, the opening of his lips is wisdom, and the tones of his voice are all modulated by powerful persuasion. But what avails this exalted genius when regulated by so impure a disposition? His lips move only to promote deceit, and his heart is wholly set on mischief. Enchantment is upon his tongue, but a pestilence in his breath that poisons the springs of existence. Death floats upon the flattery of his words, and he that listens to them shall not be innocent. *Such was Baluam*; so fascinating and so cruel: music in his voice and venom in his heart; the praise of piety in his mouth, and the hatred of God brooding in his bosom, and pervading all his actions. We are taught as ministers to rejoice with trembling: and while we discover a man enjoying the visions of the Almighty, dis-

tinguished by such extraordinary gifts, and favoured with such high converse with God, after all continuing in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity, and perishing in his sins—we have reason to try seriously our own characters, lest after preaching to others, we ourselves should become castaways.

Man possesses the power of hiding from man the secrets of his heart; and we are easily deceived by the plausible professions of the hypocrite. We know of another only just so much as the tongue reveals; and the east is not farther removed from the west, than the heart of man is sometimes distant from his lips. He alone, who made the heart, understands how deeply it has fallen, can unveil its secret *purposes*, and can bring to light its retreating depravity. When we hear some professors talk on religious subjects, we could almost imagine they had been translated into the third heaven, and were pouring out the things which Paul saw and could not utter: or that they had ascended the mount of Transfiguration with Peter, and James, and John, and were detailing the interesting conversation of Moses and Elias with their, and our, Master. How they expatiate on the glory of the cross! How they talk of internal feelings! How they enlarge on Christian experience! We can hardly persuade ourselves that these have learned to speak the language of Zion, while they are in truth aliens and foreigners. When we meet with one of this class, we say, “Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile.” But what is he *indeed*? In how many affecting instances the reverse of all that he seems! The power of religion is on his tongue; but its influence has failed to reach his heart. He can recommend it in fluent, impressive language; but he is careless whether it be promoted or dishonoured in his life. The Bible has given his real character in one short sentence: he is “as sounding brass, and a tinkling cymbal.” *Such was Balaam*. Who, in reading the praises which fell from his lips, would not conclude that he was devoutly enamoured with the prosperity of the people of God? Who would not imagine that his heart was with “Israel resting in his tents?” But in fact, he willingly relinquished a participation of the felicity which he extols with so much feeling, and with so strong conviction, for the paltry consideration of such rewards as the king of Moab—a worm like himself—could bestow; and had actually ascended the hill, whence he beheld the favoured nation, with a design to accomplish their ruin.

Some of the most abandoned characters have been made the instruments, in the hand of God, of promoting the interests of his church. Some have been so occupied unintentionally. Such were Nebuchadnezzar and Cyrus. They bowed down their shoulder to



bear, without knowing whom they served. Some have understood by whom, and for what end, they were employed: but engaged reluctantly in the work. *Such was Balaam.* His heart revolted from every word that his tongue uttered. Others again, have advanced still farther in the Divine service: they have acted under the known commission of God, and that willingly; and yet have not been holy characters. *Such was Jehu;* whose zeal was as furious as a blaze of thorns, fanned by the tempest,—and as transient too! Thus the immediate influence of God, may, for a season, counterbalance the depraved disposition of the mind, to carry into effect his own exalted purposes; and to leave the heart unchanged: it is compelled to admire what it cannot love; and dies acknowledging the good, which, alas, it has not the disposition to secure.

Who discover so much perseverance in the pursuit of a favourite object, as worldly characters? They are never weary of labouring for the meat that perisheth: we stretch not forth our hand for that which endureth to eternal life. They never relinquish the effort to amass “riches that make to themselves wings, and flee away as eagles towards heaven”—“treasures upon earth, where moth and rust corrupt, and thieves break through and steal:” we bestow no pains to obtain “durable riches and righteousness”—none to secure “treasures that are in heaven.” They compass sea and land to extend their merchandise; we despise the “Pearl of great price.” Their disappointments serve only to redouble their ardour: if they lose their object in one way, they are stimulated by that very loss to pursue it more eagerly in another: but we are terrified by every danger, shaken by every difficulty, foiled by every adversary, depressed by every discouragement. We are corrected in our lukewarmness by the perseverance of *Balaam* in so bad a cause: his reiterated defeats cannot persuade him to resign the contest; and twice repulsed, he returns again to the attack, altering a little the mode of his assault, but continuing, with undiminished resolution, to make war upon the purposes of heaven. This infatuated obstinacy terminated, as every contention with God must terminate, in the increased disgrace of the assailant, the enlarged demonstration of his own glory, and the extended advantage of his people.

The Lecture of this night pursues THE PROPHECIES OF BALAAM from the point where the last discussion dropped them, to the close of this unsuccessful enterprise against the counsel and the will of God: and we shall suffer the discourse to form such an arrangement as may arise out of the language to be examined, and as may be dictated by the predictions in their natural order.

V. 1. “*And when Balaam saw that it pleased the Lord to*

*bless Israel, he went not as at other times to seek for enchantments, but set his face toward the wilderness.*" We are with difficulty persuaded of that, which we do not wish to be true. When the fact which we are required to believe, coincides with our desires and our expectations, how conclusive its evidences appear, and how irresistible we deem the arguments by which it is supported! Under such circumstances mere possibility strikes us with all the force of demonstration. But if a truth oppose our gratifications, and require us to renounce our favourite pursuits, we admit its claims with reluctance, and are dissatisfied with every species of evidence that can be produced. On this principle we may account for the opposition with which Revelation meets from the corrupt heart of man. It is not that the evidences supporting it are deficient, but that those who reject them, *do not wish it to be true*. The establishment of its claims, must be the ruin of their hopes; and urged by the danger of so great an interest, they harden their hearts against conviction. We may trace the operation of this principle in the case of Balaam. The disapprobation of God against his journey, had been expressed in so many distinct prohibitions, and his patronage of Israel had been declared in language no less strong than intelligible; yet such is the heart of man, practising deceit upon others, and deceiving itself, that it was not till the *third* attempt to carry his point against the decisions of God, that this conviction is reluctantly admitted, and "he saw that it pleased the Lord to bless Israel."

V. 2. "*And Balaam lifted up his eyes, and he saw Israel abiding in his tents, according to their tribes, and the Spirit of God came upon him.*" Unwelcome sight to his malignant heart! He did not look down as a father looks upon his family, collected around his table, cheerful and happy. He did not look down as Moses beheld the good land, the promised inheritance of the people whom he loved. He did not look down, as angels look from the hills of light upon our tents reared for a season in this wilderness, and as we hope to look upon the church upon earth and in heaven, when we join the spirits of the just made perfect. But he looked as our immortal bard represents the great adversary of man, when he beheld the bliss of our first parents, and turned aside with envy. But however depraved was the character, and however vile the intentions of Balaam, his words were faithful and true, for "The Spirit of God came upon him," and he spake under His inspiration.

V. 3 and 4. "*And he took up his parable, and said, Balaam the*

*son of Beor hath said, and the man whose eyes are open hath said—he hath said, which heard the words of God, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open.*”—A singular exordium!—and it introduces also the series of predictions succeeding this parable, with the additional declaration, that he “*knew the knowledge of the Most High.*” I think it is not difficult to see the force and design of these expressions. They doubtless present a claim to superiority of illumination over the common intelligence irradiating the human mind—a claim to direct inspiration. His “eyes were open” to discern things not commonly seen, and his mind enlightened to anticipate events not then accomplished. On this account were prophets in old times called “*Seers.*” His eyes were opened also in a miraculous way to objects most tormenting to himself: they were opened to a sense of his guilt, his misery, and his danger; to a conviction of the beauty and the tranquillity of holiness: but his heart was not affected by these opposite “visions”—and he persisted in choosing the evil and refusing the good, till he was crushed by his own devices, and consumed in the sparks which he had kindled. Would that he were singular in his distressing situation! But, probably, in this assembly are some whose eyes have been thus opened to discover what is right, but whose hearts, unchanged by ascertaining the will of God, retain their natural disposition to pursue what is wrong. Our sins of ignorance are few, in comparison of those which are committed against light, against conscience, against privileges, against conviction. The times of darkness are passed: and this is *now* “the condemnation, that light is come into the world, but men have loved darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil.” The complaint of the spirits in prison—those unhappy spirits who are “reserved in chains of darkness, with fallen angels against the day of wrath”—cannot impute their ruin to lack of knowledge: but must express their misery in terms of self-reproach, and say—“How have I hated instruction; and my heart despised reproof!”—It is easy to perceive that Balaam declares himself possessed of divine illumination; and intimates that his words have the authority of God impressed upon them: but it may not be so easy to account for the terms in which he expresses himself on this point. Probably, when he calls himself “the man whose eyes are open”—he may allude to the circumstance of his journey, when they were closed against “the visions of the Almighty,” what time the angel withstood him, and he saw him not. The original rather implies “who had his eyes shut”—and it is inferred by the translators, that they are now



open." His "falling into a trance," yet "having his eyes open," alludes, we may conclude, to the mode of communication which God adopted in making him acquainted with his purposes, and which was probably in a vision, as distinguished from a dream; which distinction is well expressed in the language employed: he was absorbed in the scenes passing before him, but was not asleep: he was "in a trance," but had his "eyes open."—Now observe his testimony.

V. 5 and 6. "*How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob! and thy tabernacles, O Israel! As the valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the river's side, as the trees of lign-aloes which the Lord hath planted, and as cedar trees beside the waters.*" We are to consider this beautiful parable as a confirmation of the preceding predictions which have already engaged your attention. Israel's prosperity is still the subject, and is still expressed in general terms. There is in this prophecy, manifestly, a recurrence of the same thoughts, and, in some instances, a repetition of the same language. A beautiful change of imagery is presented, but the same point is held in view; and the sublimity pervading this portion of the Scriptures, corresponds with the universal majesty that forms one of their principal characteristics. It is unnecessary that I should again direct your attention to those parts of the Jewish history which justify these metaphorical representations: but having before detailed their prosperity, it may be more profitable, and, at the same time, more pleasant to show, that these promises literally belonging to the Israelites, will really apply to the present, or the anticipated situation of every real Christian. In the discussion of these subjects, we shall follow the example of the passage to pass under review in every respect: when *it* is general, we shall allow ourselves to expatiate on it in general terms; when *it* is particular, we shall also exhibit minute circumstances, which establish it, and distinct events by which it is accomplished.

The lot of Israel is the lot of the church: *it is pleasant and desirable*. "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob! and thy tabernacles, O Israel!" These are the pavilions that shelter the man from the storms of calamity, and cover him from ruin in the day of evil. The gay and the hardened may affect to despise them, but they frequently feel that they need them: and strong as their present convictions are on the side of religion, they have yet to learn how much more forcible and tormenting those convictions will be, when God arises to judgment, and the sinner shall not be permitted to stand in the congregation of the righteous. But, however "goodly" these "tents" are, they are but "tents;" and however

"pleasant" these "tabernacles," they are only a *temporary residence*. They must yield to "everlasting habitations;" they shall be exchanged for an eternal temple.

*They are fruitful, and their verdure is perpetual.* "As the valleys are they spread forth"—valleys by "the river's side"—valleys covered with "trees"—and trees which never drop their foliage. If these images express well temporal prosperity, how much more fitly do they apply to spiritual privileges! "There is a river, whose streams make glad the city of our God." Rivulets of ordinances and of consolations are perpetually flowing through the church, and arising from the same source—the "Fountain opened." The plantation flourishes, and is in health. The Psalmist represents a Christian under the image of "a tree planted by rivers of waters." *He* boasts in vain of the possession of religion, whose life and conversation is not influenced by its power. A mere professor is a barren plant, which must be rooted out and cast into the fire. But those whom the right hand of God has planted, shall "still bring forth fruit in old age"—and their leaf shall never wither.

V. 7 and 8. "*He shall pour the water out of his buckets, and his seed shall be in many waters, and his king shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted. God brought him forth out of Egypt, he hath as it were the strength of a unicorn: he shall eat up the nations his enemies, and shall break their bones, and shall pierce them through with his arrows.*" The leading features of these verses are, increase, prosperity, dignity, success, and permanency.

*Increase:* for "his seed shall be in many waters." The armies of this favoured people were then numerous and mighty: but they were still far behind the population and the glory of the Jewish nation at the close of the reign of David, and during the whole of the reign of Solomon.

*Prosperity:* "He shall pour water out of *his buckets.*" No drought shall consume their harvests and destroy the rising promise of the year. Plenty of water, showers of rain, the falling of the dew, are continually in the Scriptures figurative of abundance, inasmuch as they are the natural causes of it: and Christian prosperity borrows the same figure, for the graces of the Spirit are represented by the term "living waters."

*Dignity:* "*His king shall be higher than Agag.*" The prophetic eye saw, and the prophetic tongue foretold the day, when Agag, spared by Saul and flattering himself that the bitterness of death was passed, bowed himself at the feet of Samuel, and was hewed in pieces. The kingdom of Amalek was then destroyed—

the prediction of Balaam was then fulfilled—and the house of Israel waxed stronger and stronger.

*Success:* they were to devour their enemies, to break their bones, and to “pierce them through with his arrows.” It would afford us no personal instruction to enumerate the victories which fulfilled this prophecy: for alas! victories stand connected with wars and fightings, and blood-shed; and who could delight to detail such scenes of calamity?

*Permanency:* “His kingdom shall be exalted:” and how exalted? principally by its connexion with David’s greater Son, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and whose name shall endure for ever. We have seen the dawn of its greatness: but when our eyes are sealed by death, our children shall witness the extent of this promise; for the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our God and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever.

V. 9. “*He couched, he lay down as a lion, and as a great lion, who shall stir him up? Blessed is he that blesseth thee, and cursed is he that curseth thee.*” What an awful lesson does this terrible denunciation teach! Did not the prophet’s lips tremble, when he pronounced this sentence of condemnation against himself? What did he at Moab? What did he on the top of that mountain? Went he not thither to curse? Man frequently pronounces his own sentence! Many a profane swearer has done it, without reflection! Many an ungodly minister has done it, more solemnly and deliberately! has done it from sabbath to sabbath, and from year to year—has been an instrument of good to others, without being a partaker of the grace of God himself—has declared the decision of divine justice against transgression, while he himself fell under the denunciation, and God said, “Out of thy own mouth will I condemn thee, thou wicked servant!”

This unexpected termination of so unpleasing a series of prediction to the interests and the wishes of Balak, subdued the last remains of his patience; and the mutual recriminations passing between the soothsayer and his employer, prove the basis of worldly friendship to be laid in selfishness, its nature to be transient, and its issue disappointment. But before they separated, Balaam “advertised” the offended monarch “what this people should do to his people in the latter days.” Having nothing to apprehend from his indignation, and nothing farther to hope from his favour; stripped of those base principles which had hitherto influenced him, because there remained to him no longer an object to which they could be successfully directed; deprived of the gay visions which avarice and ambition had thus far alike placed before him; it is probable that he declared the will of God, so hostile to the king of Moab, with the less reluctance, inas-



much as he had no longer any interest at stake. At all events, the train of prophecy which follows is more distinct and less general than those which preceded; and we shall now be required, for the first time during our discussion of his eloquent and impressive parables, to descend to particulars. It is unnecessary to examine the terms with which his predictions open; and which correspond with the exordium of the last parable; or to repeat our remarks upon them. We proceed immediately to the subject of this farewell address to the ungrateful monarch who was driving from his presence a man, who, amidst all his failings, had faithfully and perseveringly endeavoured to serve him. He begins with a most affecting representation of his own situation relative to a most desirable approaching event.

V. 17. "*I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth.*" The word rendered "the corners of Moab," had been better translated "the princes of Moab." The direct reference of these words appears to be to David; the more remote, but more enlarged direction of them, to David's Lord.

Respecting no other temporal prince could be said with truth that which is here predicted of David: and for the plainest of all reasons we fix the prophecy upon him, because by him it was exactly fulfilled. The "Star and Sceptre" are terms naturally implying splendour and power. The first image suits the genius, and accords with the usual language of eastern nations, who constantly denote a monarch by this figure; and from the east, the metaphor passed through the whole world, and at length became transferred to the things themselves; so that the appearance of a comet, or the rising of an unknown star, was commonly and universally supposed to portend the birth of some illustrious prince, or a revolution in some mighty empire. The latter emblem seems most naturally to accord with monarchical government, of which the sceptre is an appendage, but which at the time of the delivery of this prophecy the government of Israel was not. This Sceptre was to "smite the princes of Moab;" which prediction was eminently fulfilled, when "the Moabites became the servants of David, and brought him presents." There is a considerable difficulty attending the close of this verse: "He shall destroy all the children of Sheth." A variety of interpretations have been given to this passage; and if "in the multitude of counsellors" "is safety"—he who consults them will also frequently find distraction. Some read, "He shall rule over," instead of "destroy, all the the children of Sheth:" perhaps this is the most natural exposition of the passage. Others read the *sons of the East*," in place of "the

*children of Sheth.*" Some translate it, "He shall destroy *the sons of noise*:" in order to support this rendering, one Hebrew word must be written for another;\* and any such alteration is a bold attempt. This last translation is supported by a parallel passage in Jeremiah, apparently quoted from this text: if the words of Jeremiah be a quotation of those of Balaam, then it is evident that the reading of the verse before us must have been different in the days of the prophet: but besides that such an error appears inconsistent with the care constantly exercised by those, whose office it was to preserve the sacred writings, and that there is no certain evidence that the passage in question is a quotation from these predictions, it is manifest the first part of the verse alluded to in Jeremiah is taken not from this place, but from the twenty-eighth verse of the twenty-first chapter of the book of Numbers; as may be immediately seen by comparing the two passages with each other. The words of Jeremiah are, "A fire shall come forth out of Heshbon, and a flame from the midst of Sihon, and shall devour the corner of Moab, and the crown of the head of the tumultuous ones:"†—and the import of the passage, so far as Moab is concerned, is indisputably the same. Nor are these different opinions all: some understand by "the children of Sheth," the Idumeans; and others imagine that "*Sheth*" was some prince or place of Moab, now unknown.‡ After all, conjecture is but poor argument in Scriptural discussion; and when the hand of time has decidedly shrouded any particular prophecy or event, we ought to be content to leave it under its venerable covering, rather than to produce our own plausible but uncertain speculations as a substitute for the fact concealed from our researches. We shall not detain you to produce the reasons by which different critics justify these different sentiments: because, when all is said, they are but hypothetical. Enough of the prophecy is clear and obvious, and to *that* we shall pass on, when we have made two remarks upon this obscurity—first, that there are many parts of the Bible to us unintelligible *merely* from its antiquity; and secondly, that what we "know not now, we shall know hereafter."

V. 18 and 19. "*And Edom shall be a possession*"—such it was made, when David "put garrisons in Edom, and all they of Edom became David's servants." In a singular passage of the book of Psalms, it appears to me that David unites the celebration of these two conquests, and that he had these victories in his remembrance, when he said, "*Moab is my wash-pot*"—that is, I have applied it to the most contemptible services, and have made it the refuse of all things—"Over Edom have I cast my shoe"—as a mark of my dominion, and of

\* שֶׁת for שָׁוֵר.

† Jer. xlviii. 45.

‡ See the note at the end of the Lecture.

their subjugation—figurative, but striking language! “*Seir also shall be a possession for his enemies.*” Bishop Newton observes that “*Seir*” is the name of the mountains of Edom—implying his conquest of their strong places. “*And Israel shall do valiantly:*” and in the reign of David, they undoubtedly attained the zenith of their military renown, which conducted them to the summit of their national glory under the succeeding peaceful and prosperous reign of Solomon. “*Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion, and shall destroy him that remaineth of the city.*” This was accomplished, when the general of David’s army, dwelt six months with all Israel “in Edom,” until he had cut off every male.

So far, we apprehend, these predictions are immediately applicable to David: but we cannot *confine* them to him, because there are some particulars which seem decidedly to relate to a greater than David: especially if we translate that obscure passage, “He shall destroy all the children of Sheth,” as some have done, “He shall rule over all the sons of men”—this can be true of no character that has yet appeared, and will be accomplished only in the future universal empire of Jesus Christ. Perhaps we should be justified in applying this passage to the Messiah, were it only on these principles, that David was, in his kingdom, in his conquests, in his person, and in his sufferings, for the most part, a type of the Redeemer. But there are other reasons, in addition to this general principle, which we shall state, before we consider the prophecy alluding, as we suppose, to the Desire of all nations.

1. It will appear in the examination of that verse upon which our opinion is chiefly founded, that the images employed to prefigure the extraordinary Governor, whoever he might be, whose rising Balaam foresaw, are applicable in the strictest sense to the person, the offices, and the dominion of Christ; while they form a remarkable coincidence with the metaphors by which he was afterwards represented.

2. The most learned and celebrated Jewish Paraphrasts, with the Christian Fathers, agree in applying the passage to the Messiah: so that it can scarcely be considered as the sole offspring of a fruitful imagination.

3. In a candid and accurate examination of Scripture Prophecy, it will be generally granted that many predictions wore two aspects; that these shorter ones especially had often a double reference; and that while they regarded approaching events, they also looked through the lengthened mists of futurity, to a period more remote, when the Lord himself should come to his temple—an event of the very first magnitude, and a point in which prophecy and providence were alike absorbed. There are many passages, which might be pro-



duced, of this description: among others is that remarkable verse in Hosea, "I called my Son out of Egypt"—which indisputably, from its connexion, refers to the deliverance of Israel from Egyptian bondage: yet the Evangelist Matthew applies it to the return of Jesus from Egypt, whither he had fled to avoid the wrath of Herod; and I am not among the number of those who entertain so partial views of his inspiration, as to imagine he might be mistaken. Other parallel instances might be produced; but your time admonishes me that this is enough for the present purpose.

4. In those days, clear and decisive revelations were made respecting the Saviour. The Old Testament Scriptures, and the former Dispensation, held him perpetually in view. He was presented to Eve, immediately after man's apostacy, under the title "The Seed of the Woman." To Abraham, he was manifested as his offspring: "In thy Seed, shall all nations of the Earth be blessed." To Moses he appeared "a Prophet like unto himself." To Isaiah he was revealed more perfectly, in all the majesty of that nature,

"Which centred in his make such strange extremes!"

"A child"—yet "the mighty God!"—"A Son"—yet "the Father of Eternity!"—The "Prince of Peace," upon whose "shoulder" universal empire was to sit; and of whose "government and peace," there was to be "no end." Thus also Balaam saw him rise as a "Star," and rule as a "Sceptre." Under these two images, let us draw near with reverence, and behold "the Lord Christ."

First, "THERE SHALL COME A STAR OUT OF JACOB." It is difficult to account for the coming of the wise men from the East to Jerusalem, in search of Jesus, at the birth of our Lord, had not this prophecy been well known, at least traditionally in their country, and understood to refer to the advent of the Messiah, then universally an object of greater or of less expectation. An unknown Star made its appearance in the heavens, the figure, the motion, and all the circumstances of which, convinced them that it was supernatural. What then? Why did they come to Jerusalem? It may be answered, that its direction led them to that quarter. But why did they come expecting the birth of some extraordinary person, rather than the occurrence of some extraordinary event? If it be replied, that a comet was supposed to signify an extraordinary birth, we deny, that in ancient times, and in the heathen

world, it was *confined* to the indication of the advent of some extraordinary personage: but we contend, and we are not afraid to say, that the testimony of all ancient history will bear out the assertion, that it was, at least, as frequently supposed to portend some great revolution. But these men came, "saying, Where is HE that *is* born King of the Jews: for we have seen *his* STAR in the East, and are come to worship him." It can scarcely be doubted that Balaam's prophecies then still prevailed among "the Mountains of the East," and that these sages understood this luminous appearance in the heavens to refer to Him, whom Balaam called "the STAR of Jacob."

The names and titles ascribed to Jesus in a variety of subsequent places in the Scriptures, seem to allude to this singular prediction: he is denominated "the day-spring from on high," by the father of John the Baptist; the "day-star," by the apostle Peter; and in the book of the Revelations he styles himself "the bright and Morning-star."

The metaphor accords well with his Nature and with his offices. With his *Nature*. A star, it is said, in Egyptian hieroglyphics, denoted the Deity. Thus God also reproved Israel, by the prophet Amos, and said, "Ye have borne the tabernacle of *the star* of your god, which ye made to yourselves." Thus also testified against them the first martyr Stephen—"Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and *the star* of your god, Remphan, figures which ye made, to worship them"—and which were, therefore, doubtless considered appropriate emblems of the Divinity. This metaphor is, therefore, probably used according to the genius of eastern language, to shadow out the dignity of the Saviour's nature. It also agrees with his *offices*. A star is frequently an important guide. Before the invention of the compass, what was the mariner at sea, when "for many days neither sun nor star appeared?"—A star is concluded to be a sun diminished by distance, possessing heat as well as light, and the probable centre of another system. There is life and light in the Saviour. Those only perish in darkness and in death, who are, in relation to Him, as we are placed in respect of the fixed stars—at an immeasurable distance. Those also who seek him as a guide, will find him "the way, the truth, and the life;" and no one can "come to the Father, except by him." Purity, beauty, majesty, a variety of other particulars might be produced, if it could be necessary, to prove the elegance and the fitness of this image in application to Christ.

Secondly, "A SCEPTRE SHALL RISE OUT OF ISRAEL." Is a

sceptre the emblem of *Authority* and of *Power*? He claims all "power in heaven and on earth." He exerted the power which he claims in manifold ways, during his pilgrimage with man; in the suspension of the laws of nature; in the control of furious elements, and more furious passions; in the cure of mortal diseases; in the command of the invisible world, and over the empire of death. This was the Sceptre of Israel which smote the foundation of the throne of darkness; and "Satan fell as lightning from heaven." Is a sceptre the emblem of *Majesty* and of *Dominion*? Hear him speak of himself—"I am the first and the last"—"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty." Hear the language of his apostles—They call him "the King eternal, immortal, invisible"—"the only wise God our Saviour." Hear the testimony of the Father himself—of the Son he saith, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom." Thus, we believe, that the irresistible sway of Jesus Christ was the subject of Balaam's prophecy; and was typified also by the inferior dominion of David—his ancestor "according to the flesh."

Before I proceed to the discussion of the little that now remains of Balaam's predictions, it will be necessary to detain you in order to make a few general observations very closely connected with the subject, and which I wish to introduce here as preliminary considerations, that they may not interrupt us hereafter as we pass on. With respect to *Providence*, we know that the ways of God are perfect, but our comprehension of them is limited. It is yet night with us; and will continue so till we quit the present state of being. Our brightest moments, are but as the dawn of the morning, when cloud and mist rest upon the landscape, and every object seen at all, is discerned only darkly and uncertainly. Man is acting irrationally when he attempts to bring down all the operations of an infinite mind to his standard. All that he comprehends of the plans of God, is harmonious and wise: his conclusion ought to be, when he no longer comprehends them perfectly, that the defect is in himself and not in the thing contemplated: but unhappily the pride of his heart leads him to another and a false conclusion, that what his limited capacity cannot comprehend, is in itself incomprehensible. The fact only is, that it is so to *him*: but this involves nothing respecting the thing itself, and proves nothing except that it is of a higher order than his own. The same thing may be remarked with respect to *prophecy*. Some parts of the predictions before us, are a little obscure in themselves, and are



made more so by commentators. Every man conjectures, if he can do nothing else; and thus hypothesis is heaped upon hypothesis, because the interpreter will aim at originality; till, amidst much learning and ingenuity, the very existence and purport of the text vanish out of sight. In the few verses which remain to be considered, we shall not follow expositors through all their intricacies, but at once show what appears to us the natural direction of the words. Where we cannot trace the fulfilment of them, we shall confess our inability, entreating you to keep in mind what we have now premised. Prophecy must be explained by providence, to be clearly understood. When, therefore, it relates to remote events the very remembrance of which has perished, and to transactions the record of which is lost, the prediction of necessity becomes obscure: we have no longer the medium through which it might be interpreted: the defect is not in the prediction, which clearly related to positive events: but in the absence of the history which could have rendered it luminous. Having established this, we grant nothing to infidelity, in granting that the prediction *is* obscure; since it is *not* so in *itself*, but *appears* so to *us*, because of the scantiness of our information on the subjects to which it refers. We shall, therefore, never shrink from confessing that we do not perceive its meaning, where we cannot trace its relation to events connected with it, but which the hand of time has blotted out from the records of this world. These remarks will be found to apply to some preceding parts of this Lecture, and to some of the former prophecies of Balaam, as well as to those which yet remain briefly to be considered.

V. 20. "*And when he looked on Amalek, he took up his parable, and said, Amalek was the first of the nations, but his latter end shall be, that he perish for ever.*" Amalek is justly called "The first of the nations," from its splendour and antiquity. The origin of this people cannot be now traced with any degree of certainty. They are mentioned in the connexion of that battle from the disastrous issue of which Abraham rescued Lot; and were, therefore, considerably older than their neighbours, Moab and Edom. This prediction of Balaam, but confirms what God had before ordained and asserted by the mouth of Moses; for "He is of one mind, and who can turn him?"—In due time the sentence began to be executed; and it is now completely finished. Saul withered their power, and desolated their country. Scarcely had they "recovered a little strength, when David smote a more dreadful blow, which he reiterated at Ziklag. And in the days of Hezekiah, the sons of Simeon destroyed the remnant." We look around for them at

this hour, and they are not! We have learned only enough of them from tradition to know that "Amalek was the first of the nations"—while we are witnesses "his latter end has been that he has perished for ever!"

V. 21 and 22. "*And he looked on the Kenites; and took up his parable, and said, Strong is thy dwelling-place, and thou puttest thy nest in a rock; nevertheless, the Kenite shall be wasted until Ashur shall carry thee away captive.*" There is the same uncertainty respecting the origin of the Kenites, which we noticed in respect of Amalek; and it is of little consequence to the prophecy that we should attempt to remove it. We read of "Kenites dwelling with the Amalekites," in the days of Saul. The Amalekites were to be utterly destroyed: but the "Kenites were to be carried away captive by Ashur, or the Assyrian." Now mark how the prophecy was guarded by Providence. When Saul was raised up to destroy Amalek, he was withheld by an invisible hand from involving the Kenites in their ruin. He did not seem to have this prophecy, but another event in view, when he spared them; and thus fulfilled the purposes of Heaven, without knowing it. "And Saul said to the Kenites, Go, get you down from among the Amalekites, lest I destroy you with them: for ye showed kindness to all the children of Israel, when they came out of Egypt. So the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites." But a torrent was collecting in Assyria, which rolled its impetuous flood over Judea, and, with resistless violence, desolated all surrounding nations: the Kenites were doubtless swept away by it, since we read of some of them emerging from its waves with the Jews, at the end of the captivity. Thus was "the Kenite wasted, till Ashur carried him away captive."

V. 23 and 24. "*And he took up his parable, and said, Alas! who shall live when God doeth this?*" An awful introduction to the solemn prediction suspended upon it! "*And ships shall come from the coast of Chittim, and shall afflict Ashur, and shall afflict Eber, and he also shall perish for ever!*" In the dissertations of Bishop Newton upon these prophecies, a very long, and very laborious criticism is given, the amount of which establishes that "the coast of Chittim," is a general name for the countries and islands lying upon the Mediterranean: and that Greece, particularly Macedonia; or Italy, or both, (which is most probable) were the countries particularly alluded to, as sending "ships to afflict Ashur." Whether it referred to one, or both of these empires, it is equally true; since they were, separately and successively, the scourge of Asia. Ashur, or Assyria, was first subdued by Alexander the Great; and after-

wards Rome overran all its regions in the days of Trajan. Thus "ships from the coast of Chittim afflicted Ashur."

It remains that we trace its fulfilment in relation to "*Eber*." Now, whether it refer to the Jews themselves, the descendants of Heber, or to the people bordering upon the Euphrates, (for the word signifies *beyond*—and the phrase "*beyond the river*," is sometimes used in the Scriptures to denote those, who dwell on the other side of the Euphrates; which is styled *the River*, by way of distinction and pre-eminence) it amounts to the same thing, for in both cases the prediction received its full accomplishment. If it refer to the *Jews*—they were desolated by Alexander's successors; and were still more grievously afflicted by the Romans, who scattered them abroad over the face of the whole earth: or if it belong to the people bordering upon the Euphrates (which is the most probable, seeing Balaam is predicting the *prosperity* of the Hebrews; and would have been glad to have prophesied evil of the Jews, could he have done it, under their more immediate and more intelligible name of Israel) *they also* were, with the Assyrians, successively subdued by the Greeks and by the Romans.

We have now only to examine the last clause of the verse, which relates to the inhabitants of Chittim themselves; (at least, I presume the words apply to the principal agent, which is here manifestly Chittim:) of Chittim it is said—"And he also shall perish for ever." The conquests of Alexander were rapid, and almost boundless. But his projects were too extensive, and his empire too vast, to be held together by any mortal hand. This he might have foreseen, and have checked his victories and his enterprises midway: but human rapacity has no limits, and the whole world is too narrow for ambition. His throne trembled under its own weight, while he filled it; and when the stronger arm of death dragged the victor from his seat, it fell with him. Under his successors his kingdom was dismembered; among themselves it was rent in pieces; and the whole Grecian empire was subverted by the rising genius of Rome.

On this circumstance I cannot forbear giving you the sentiments and the observations of an historian, whose faithfulness of narration, extent of judgment, and force of reasoning are to be equalled only by his piety. His history, which stands a monument of human industry, is a fund of information and entertainment inexhaustible; and I will take the liberty to recommend it to young persons, as one of the best guides to trace the footsteps of Providence in the accomplishment of prophecy, that literature has furnished. Rollin in his *Ancient History* has said—



"The only remedy for the various calamities" resulting from the death of Alexander, "seemed to consist in the speedy nomination of a successor; and the troops, as well as the officers, and the whole Macedonian state, seemed at first to be very desirous of this expedient: and indeed, their common interest and security, with the preservation of their new conquests, amidst the barbarous nations that surrounded them, made it necessary for them to consider this election as their first and most important care, and to turn their thoughts to the choice of a person qualified to fill so arduous a station, and sustain the weight of it in such a manner as to be capable of supporting the general order and tranquillity. But it had already been written, 'that the kingdom of Alexander should be divided and rent asunder after his death,' and that it should not be transmitted in the usual manner 'to his posterity.'\*" No efforts of human wisdom could establish a sole successor to that prince. In vain did they deliberate, consult, and decide;"—Isaiah had said, 'It shall not be, it shall not stand, it shall not be carried into completion;† "nothing could be executed contrary to the pre-ordained event, and nothing short of it could possibly subsist. A superior and invisible power had already disposed of the kingdom, and divided it by an inevitable decree. The circumstances of this partition had been denounced nearly three centuries before the time: the portions of it had already been assigned to different possessors, and nothing could frustrate that division, which was only to be deferred for a few years. Till the arrival of that period, men indeed might raise commotions, and concert a variety of movements; but all their efforts would only tend to the accomplishment of what had been ordained by the sovereign Master of kingdoms, and of what had been foretold by his prophet."‡

Rome stretched her sceptre in turn over the enslaved world, and held her prodigious conquests through many successive ages. But Rome gradually yielded to the impressions of time, the innovations of luxury, and the attacks of barbarians. The Northern Nations overthrew her venerable throne. Greece and Rome now exist only in name, in history, in ruins; and thus Chittim "also has perished for ever!"

We now bid farewell to Balaam; and it is a melancholy farewell! He had sacrificed to the king of Moab, his conscience, his integrity, his peace of mind, and his future happiness: yet because he could not sacrifice Israel also (which in truth Balak knew he would

\* Dan. xi. 4.

† Non erit, non stabit non fiat. ISAI.

‡ Rollin's Anc. Hist. vol. vii. sect. 1, p. 2 and 3. 8vo. edit. 1800.

willingly have done had not a stronger arm restrained him) he was sent home in disgrace, proscribed as an offender, and urged to flee on peril of stronger evidences of indignation on part of the offended monarch. Not only was he thus dismissed, unrewarded and insulted: but his employer aggravated his cruel disappointment, by taunting him with what he designed to have done for him. O my friend! if indeed you are wasting your best days, and sacrificing your noblest powers in the service of the world and of sin—turn again and look once more at Balaam, with melancholy steps retracing his journey back to the mountains of the east, unattended and unhonoured! Not such a return had he anticipated, when he set out accompanied by the princes of Moab, with the promise of a reward as boundless as his ambition! See then the picture of your own destination! In the evening of life, when you expect from the world the promised recompense; you will be left to lay your hoary head upon a pillow of thorns; and find too late, that “the wages of sin is death;” and that the smiles of the world are destruction. Descending into the vale of years, you shall “look for peace, but find despair, companion of your way!”

Balaam is now no more! He is as though he had never been, so far as himself is concerned! What does it now avail him, that the renown of his talents reached the court of Moab, from the retirement of the mountains of the East? What does it avail him, that a monarch sought his assistance, and that a king became a suppliant to him? And who, or what is Balak? All his wealth bestowed upon the unhappy man who preferred his friendship to the friendship of God, had he kept his promise to its widest extent, could not now compensate the wretched but illustrious prophet of Mesopotamia! His honours—his riches—have perished with him: his guilt—his infamy remain for ever!

So shall all thine enemies perish, O Lord! Christian, do not envy them their transient renown. Hold on thy way, through the lowly, sequestered vale of life, rejoicing! Advance softly and silently—obscure and unnoticed to heaven! There is thy life, thy renown, thy record, thy recompense! The sword of justice quivers over the head of guilty greatness. God says, to them in the very midst of their hopes—“Return, ye children of men”—and “see! their countenances change, and they go to their place.” The voice of mortality also addresses you: but the voice of Jesus mingles with the notes of death. He calls you home. “Arise,” he says, “enter into the joy of thy Lord!”

## NOTES.

## NOTES TO THE SIXTH LECTURE.

THE most obscure passage in the prophecies discussed in the preceding Lecture, is the declaration that the "Star" and "sceptre" of "Jacob" should "smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth." In the foregoing pages, I have expressed the meaning of the passage as it appears to me; and I shall, in this note, subjoin the sentiments of different Commentators, on the respective merits of which, the reader will form his own opinion.

Bishop Newton says—"If by Sheth was meant the Son of Adam, then *all the children of Sheth* are all mankind, the posterity of Cain and Adam's other sons having all perished in the Deluge, and the line only of Sheth having been preserved in Noah and his family: but it is very harsh to say that any King of Israel would destroy all mankind, and therefore the Syriac and Chaldee soften it, that he shall *subdue* all the sons of Sheth, and *rule over* all the sons of men. (Et subjugabit omnes filios Seth. *Syr.* Et dominabitur omnium filiorum hominum. *Chal.*) The word occurs only in this place, and in Isaiah, xxii. 5, where it is used in the sense of *breaking down* or *destroying*: and as particular places, Moab and Edom are mentioned both before and after; so it is reasonable to conclude that not all mankind in general, but some particular persons were intended by the expression of *the sons of Sheth*. The Jerusalem Targum translates it *the sons of the East*, the Moabites lying east of Judea. Rabbi Nathan says that *Sheth* is the name of a city in the border of Moab. Grotius imagines Sheth to be the name of some famous king among the Moabites. Our Poole, who is a judicious and useful commentator, says that *Sheth* 'seems to be the name of some then eminent, though now unknown, place or prince in Moab, where there were many princes, as appears from Numb. xxiii. 6, Amos ii. 3, there being innumerable instances of such places or persons sometimes famous, but now utterly lost as to all monuments and remembrances of them.' Vitringa, in his Commentary upon Isaiah, conceives that the Idumeans were intended, the word *Sheth*, signifying a *foundation*, or *fortified* place, because they trusted greatly in their castles and fortifications. But the Idumeans are mentioned afterwards; and it is probable that as two hemistichs relate to them, two also relate to the Moabites; and the reasons of the appellation assigned by Vitringa, is as proper to the Moabites as to the Idumeans. It is common in the style of the Hebrews, and especially in the poetic parts of scripture, and we may observe it particularly in these prophecies of Balaam, that the same thing in effect is repeated in other words, and the latter member of each period is exegetical of the former, as in the passage before us—"I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not nigh:" and then again, 'There shall come a star out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel:' and again afterwards, 'And Edom shall be a possession, Seir also shall be a possession for his enemies.' There is great reason, therefore, to think, that the same manner of speaking was continued here, and consequently that *Sheth* must be the name of some eminent place or person among the Moabites; 'and shall smite the princes of Moab, and destroy all the sons of Sheth.'"

*Bp. Newton on the Proph. vol. i. Dissert. v. p. 73 and 74.*

The writers of the Anc. Univ. Hist. thus express their opinion. "According to the genius of the Hebrew tongue, wherein it is elegant to repeat the same sentence in different expressions, by the children of Seth, the Moabites should be intended; but why they are so called we cannot find. There is a passage in Jeremiah which seems to prove that in his time this place was differently read. 'A fire,' says that prophet, 'shall come out of Heshbon, a flame from the midst of Sihon, which shall devour the corner of Moab, and the crown of the head of the tumultuous ones; or, as is better rendered in the margin, of the children of noise. The former part of this passage is taken from another text, and the latter from that which we are now speaking of. The difference between them is very little in the original'—(only  $\gamma$  in place of  $\eta$ ) "Jeremiah, instead of קרקר karkar, shall destroy, having קדקד kadkod, the crown of



the head (which is the reading of the Samaritan Pentateuch in this very place) and instead of שֵׁת Seth שאון Shaon, noise. But we dare not hence make any correction."

*Anc. Univ. Hist. vol. ii. B. i. Chap. 3, p. 108. Note N. Dublin edit. 1745.*

Dr. Geddes renders the passage—"The sons of Sedition. The Heb. is בְּנֵי שֵׁת in our common translation rendered 'the children of Seth;' and so indeed most of the ancient and modern versions. But what, pray, has Seth, or Sheth, to do with Moab? I am convinced that שֵׁת here means *sedition, contempt, rebellion*, &c. See the root שָׂה, the Arab. שתאת, the Sam. שִׁשֶׁת, the Æthiopic SHAT, and the Chald. and Syr. שוּט; and comp. Jeremiah in the verse already quoted" (the same is referred to by Univ. Hist. and in the preceding Lecture) "where he has שָׂה instead of שֵׁת. The Moabites were subdued by David, and made tributary to Israel; but after the death of Ahab they rebelled; but were conquered by the joint efforts of Joram and Joshaphat, assisted by the King of Edom. Comp. 2 Sam. 8. 2, and 2 Kings 3. 4 to 24. But under the denomination of בְּנֵי שֵׁת, *sons of sedition*, may be designed every turbulent neighbour."

*Dr. Geddes' Crit. Rem. upon Num. xxiv. 17, vol. i. p. 400.*

Respecting the whole Verse, the excellent Saurin remarks—"Ce fut alors qu'il, prononça ce fameux Oracle, dont le sens a partagé les Interprètes dans tous les Siècles: *Je le voi: mais non pas maintenant: je le regarde, mais non pas de près. Une Etoile est procédée de Jacob, un Sceptre s'est élevé d' Israël: il transpercera les coins de Moab, et il détruira tous les Enfants de Seth.* Tous les sentimens sont réunis sur un article, c'est que Balaam prédit un Conquérant: peut-être même qu'en l'appellant *une Etoile*, il s'accommodoit à cette ancienne opinion que l'apparition des Comètes marquoit, ou l'exaltation, ou la chute des Royaumes. Quelques Interprètes ont crû que c'étoit la pensée de ces Mages, dont il est parlé dans l'Evangile, qui disoient: *Ou est le Roi des Juifs, car nous avons vu son Etoile en Orient?* Mais si l'on s'accorde dans la pensée que Balaam predisoit un Roi, l'on se partage quand il est question de déterminer quel est le Roi qu'il avoit en vûe. Quelques-uns l'entendent de David, qui asservit les Moabites, et qui auroit ainsi vérifié ce mot de l'Oracle: *Il transpercera les coins, ou comme portent quelques anciennes Editions des Septante, les Princes de Moab.* Mais plusieurs Interprètes Juifs et Chrétiens l'expliquent du Messie. Un Imposteur Juifs trompa plusieurs de ceux de sa Nation sous l'Empire d'Hadrien. Il prit le nom de *Barchochéba*, c'est-à-dire, *Fils de l'Etoile*, et se donna pour ce Messie que Balaam avoit en vûe. Les Juifs après avoir découvert son imposture l'appellèrent *Bar-coziba*, c'est-à-dire, *Fils du Mensonge.*

Il y a aussi quelque obscurité dans cette autre expression: *Il détruira tous les Enfants de Seth.* Si on la prend dans un sens auquel elle peut être restreinte, elle signifie l'Eglise. Si l'on y attache l'idée qu'elle offre naturellement à l'Esprit, elle marque tout le Genre humain. En quel de ces deux sens qu'on la prenne, il faudra lui faire beaucoup de violence pour en trouver l'accomplissement dans la personne de David, même dans celle du Messie. La conjecture de quelques Savans, adoptée par un célèbre Critique, est un elef à ce passage. Ils présumant qu'il y avoit quelque peuple qui portoit le nom de Seth, et qui étoit voisin de la Moabitude. Grotius croit que c'étoit un Roi de ce temps-là. Aussi Balaam après avoir prédit la ruine de Moab, et de ceux qu'il appelle *les Enfants de Seth*, peut-être sous cet emblème, celle des ennemis de l'Eglise, prédit celle des Iduméens, celle des Amalékites, celle des Kénians, non des Descendans de Jéthro Beau-Père de Moïse, mais de ceux dont il est parlé dans le chap. xv. de la Génèse. Tous ces peuples étoient voisins de la Moabitude. Balaam s'écria à la vûe des malheurs qui devoient fondre sur toutes ces nations *malheur à celui qui vivra quand le Dieu fort fera ces choses!* Il porta même sa vûe jusques aux conquêtes qu'Alexandre le Grand fit sur les Assyriens, et si nous en rapportons à quelques Interprètes, il prophétisa même la destruction totale des Juifs sous le nom d'*Heber*, un de leurs Patriarches: Commentaire qui a ses difficultés."

*Saur. Disc. sur la Bible, tome i. Disc. lxiv. p. 515, 516, fol. a la Haye, 1728.*

*Then it was he pronounced that famous oracle, which has so divided commentators, in all ages, to develope the meaning of it. "I shall see him, but not now, &c." ver. 17.*

All opinions unite in one circumstance, which is, that Balaam spoke of a conqueror; it may be, also, in calling him a star, he accommodated himself to the ancient notion, that the appearance of comets denoted either the elevation or ruin of kingdoms. Some interpreters have thought that this was the belief also of the Magi mentioned in the Gospel, who inquired, "Where is the King of the Jews? for we have seen his STAR in the east."—But if they were agreed, that Balaam predicted a king, they are divided as to THE King whom he intended. Some think it was David, who subdued the Moabites, and who might thus be said to verify that part of the prediction—"He shall smite the corners"—or, as some ancient copies of the Septuagint translate it, "the princes of Moab." But a great many commentators, both Jewish and Christian, explain it of the Messiah. A Jewish impostor deceived several of his own nation in the reign of the Emperor Adrian; he assumed the name of BARCOCHABA, that is to say, the son of a STAR; and declared himself the Messiah meant by Balaam. The Jews, after they discovered the cheat, called him BARCOZIBA, or the Son of a Lie.

There is also some obscurity in that other expression—"He shall destroy all the children of Sheth." If it be taken in the sense to which it may be restrained, it signifies the Church; if we affix to it the idea which it naturally offers to the mind, it implies all mankind. But in either of these two meanings, we must do great violence to it to find the accomplishment of it in David, or even in the Messiah. The conjecture of some learned men, and which has been adopted by a celebrated critic (M. le Clerc) affords a key to this passage. They suppose that there was a people who bore the name of Sheth, and that they were neighbours to Moab. Grotius conjectures that it was a king of that time. Accordingly, Balaam, having foretold the destruction of Moab, and of those whom he calls the Children of Sheth; and, perhaps, under this emblem of the enemies of the Church, goes on to foretell that of the Idumeans, of the Amalekites, of the Kenites, not the descendants of Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, but of those mentioned in the 15th chapter of Genesis. All these nations were neighbours of the Moabites. At the foresight of these evils about to fall upon all these nations, he exclaimed, "Alas! who shall live when God doeth this!" He extended his view even to the conquests of Alexander the Great over the Assyrians; and, if we may believe some interpreters, he prophesied even the total destruction of the Jews, under the name of HEBER, one of their Patriarchs: A Comment not without its difficulties.

The opinion of the learned Poole on this passage has already been quoted in the Extract from Bp. Newton. He allows that the word קרקר which is rendered in our translation *vastabit*—"destroy" may be rendered, with equal propriety, *subjugabit* "subdue;" and in support of this translation produces many Hebrew words, which, in their formation, acquire a sense not only different, but even opposite to the root whence they are derived: "multa sunt apud Hebræos verba ex nominibus contrario significato efformata." He will not allow the children of Seth to mean all mankind—because the prophecy had all along been specific—and he had been speaking of a certain people, such as, the Moabites, the Edomites, and the Amalekites—because, also, that on this supposition the Jews must have destroyed all people, which is not justified by fact. "Non placet; 1. Quia prius loquitur de certo populo, i. e. de Moabitibus, et post hos de Edomæis, et Amalakitis. 2. Tunc Israelitæ detruxissent omnes populos; quod falsum." I confess I do not feel the force of this reasoning: since those who consider the term *children of Seth* to mean all mankind, and the word קרקר to rule over, or to subdue, also refer the victory, and the reign, anticipated in this acceptance of the prediction, to the Messiah; in reference to whom, it is not only not improbable, but is partially accomplished, and must eventually be universally true. For he shall have "the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession." Poole, upon the whole, thinks that it was the name of some nation, or people then known, and upon the confines of Judea: that it might especially refer to the Canaanites who were the descendants of Seth more immediately; or that it was the name of a city in the land of Moab; or that it was more probably the name of some very distinguished Ruler among the Moabites. "Videtur esse nomen gentis, vel populi tunc noti, et finitimi Judæis. Forte Cananæos intelligit, qui filii Sethi sunt, Gen. v. Seth est nomen civitatis in terra Moab. Nihil vero propius quàm Seth nominatum fuisse Regem aliquem eximium inter Moabitas."

*Poli Synopsis, &c. tom. 1, Comment. in Num. cap. xxiv. 17. p. 715, 716. Fol.*

The learned and excellent John Fell, whose name is endeared to me by every feeling of gratitude and affection as my earliest instructor, and to whose memory I can-

not still but shed tears of sad and pleasing remembrance; whose general information was of such acknowledged extent, and who was especially celebrated for the accuracy and justice of his Biblical criticisms—justifies, from the Targums, the translation substituted for the rendering “destroy”—(he even uses a milder term than subdue, or rule over—*protect*) applies the term, children of Sheth, to the whole human race—and the accomplishment of the prophecy, to the Messiah.

“‘There shall come a star out of Jacob,’ and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy (or rather *protect*) ‘all the children of Sheth;’ for such is the meaning of the passage. ‘All the children of Sheth’—are, undoubtedly, all mankind. Noah descended from Sheth, and from Noah, all the nations that are now upon the face of the earth. To *destroy* all the children of Sheth, would be to leave none to rule over—none to exercise the sceptre among men. Thus the Targums explain themselves: ‘A mighty Prince shall arise out of the house of Jacob, and the Messiah shall be anointed.’—In this respect, they agree with the most learned Christian interpreters of those very ancient predictions.”

*Fell's and Hunter's Lect. on the Evid. of Christ. Lect. ii. p. 37, by Mr. Fell.*

Matthew Henry, who with practical exposition, written with great simplicity of style, and much point of expression, blends often judicious and important criticisms—refers this passage without hesitation to the Messiah; and thus expresses himself on this controverted member of the verse: “But the Messiah shall destroy—or, as some read it, shall *rule over* all the children of Seth: i. e. all the children of men, which descend from Seth the son of Adam; the descendants of all the rest of Adam's sons being cut off by the Deluge. Christ shall be King, not only of Jacob and Israel, but of all the world; so that all the children of Seth shall be either governed by his golden sceptre, or dashed in pieces by his iron rod. He shall set up a universal rule, authority, and power of his own, and shall put down all opposing rule; 1 Cor. xv. 24. He shall *unwall* all the children of Sheth: so some read it. He shall take down all their defences and carnal confidences, so as that they shall either admit his government, or lie open to his judgment.”

*Matt. Henry's Exposition of the Old and New Test. vol. i. on Num. xxiv. 17. Fol.*

In his eloquent and instructive Lectures on Sacred Biography, Dr. Henry Hunter, adverts to this passage only generally (as, to have entered minutely into it would have been to have departed from his plan; which was to delineate characters) yet he refers it decidedly to the Messiah. “The burden of this prophecy has evidently a twofold object; the one improving upon, rising above and extending beyond the other. Its primary and nearer object, David, God's anointed king, to crush the power of the enemy, and Moab in particular, and to perfect the conquest of the promised land. Its secondary and more remote one, though first in point of importance, “Jesus the root and offspring of David.”—In the one Balak saw the death of his worldly hopes, the approaching dominion of a hated power, established on the ruins of his own country. In the other, Balaam beheld the ruin of all his prospects beyond the grave; a light that should shine but to conduct him to the place of punishment; a star that should arise to shed the mildest influence on others, but only to breathe pestilence and death upon himself; a ruler that should exercise universal dominion, but who, while he presided over his willing and obedient subjects in mercy and loving kindness, should rule rebels like him with a rod of iron.”—

*Dr. Hunter's Lect. on Sacred Biography, vol. iv. Lect. xvii. p. 455, 456. Char. of Balaam.*



## LECTURE VII.

THE PROPHECIES OF MOSES RESPECTING THE FORMER, AND THE PRESENT  
STATE OF THE JEWS.

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 DEUT. XXVIII. 49—53; AND 64—68.

The Lord shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand: a nation of fierce countenance, which will not regard the person of the old, nor show favour to the young. And he shall eat the fruit of thy cattle, and the fruit of thy land until thou be destroyed: which also shall not leave thee either corn, wine, or oil, or to the increase of thy kine, or flocks of thy sheep, until he have destroyed thee. And he shall besiege thee in all thy gates, until thy high and fenced walls come down, wherein thou trustedest, throughout all thy land: and he shall besiege thee in all thy gates throughout all the land, which the Lord thy God hath given thee. And thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons and of thy daughters (which the Lord thy God hath given thee) in the siege and in the straitness wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee.——And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other; and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even wood and stone. And amongst these nations thou shalt find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest: but the Lord shall give thee a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind. And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee, and thou shalt fear day and night, and thou shalt have none assurance of thy life. In the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were even! and at even thou shalt say, Would God it were morning! for the fear of thine heart wherewith thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see. And the Lord shall bring thee into Egypt again with ships, by the way whereof I spake unto thee. Thou shalt see it no more again; and there ye shall be sold unto your enemies, for bondmen and bondwomen, and no man shall buy you.

God has never left himself, in any age of the world, without a witness. Successive periods, of time have been distinguished by manifestations peculiar to themselves, and adapted to their respective circumstances and necessities. In the ages before the flood, human LONGEVITY formed a standing and forcible display of Divine truth and energy. The father transmitted to his children's children those oral communications which he had received directly from the Deity: and they passed through but few hands to reach many

and distinct generations. From the days of Noah to the birth of Moses, although the life of man was shortened, revelation continued uninterrupted, having this impressive evidence, that the intercourse between God and man was IMMEDIATE. Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, spake with him, "as a man speaketh to his friend." The remembrance of the visits enjoyed in the land of Canaan, accompanied the family of Jacob to the house of Joseph in Egypt; and lived long afterwards amid the cruel bondage of Israel's more removed descendants. For when "Joseph died, and all that generation," a new prophet arose; and to the patriarchal succeeded the Mosaic dispensation. This had also its characteristic features. Then were the truths, revealed from the beginning, committed to writing: and a witness, both to the fidelity of former traditions and to the pretensions assumed by Moses, was given in MIRACLES. These miracles were open to the "many thousands of Israel," and were adapted to their exigences. These were proofs stronger than unbelief itself dared to question—and which they could neither gainsay nor resist. They could not doubt that the power of God was with their general, when they followed him through the Red Sea. *They* could not doubt the divine origin, and the consequent obligations of the law, who not only were witnesses in common with ourselves of its purity, but who also heard the thunder and the sound of the trumpet—who saw the lightning and the "thick darkness where God was." They could not doubt the reality of His existence and paternal care, under whose patronage they lived, and the visible symbol of whose presence preceded them, filling their hearts with courage, and overwhelming their adversaries with dismay. Miracles advanced far into the Jewish history: but before they ceased, a new species of evidence arose, no less conclusive, better adapted to its age, and the demonstration of which has not failed to this hour. PROPHECY, which had scattered its radiance partially in the earliest periods of time, became, from David especially, the shining light which gradually increased to perfect day. The gift of prophecy as a distinguishing characteristic of the times ceased with Malachi: and three hundred years after him appeared a DIVINE TEACHER. It is remarkable that for the space of three centuries no revelation was granted; and the world was kept in solemn expectation of HIM, who was to "teach us all things:" thus, the shadows thicken, in the natural world, before the day breaks. Upon this spiritual gloom the Sun of righteousness arose. "The word was made flesh, and tabernacled among us." Under his auspices a new dispensation, more simple, yet more glorious, than that which had now waxed old, prevailed. All the separate rays

of Deity, dimly reflected from face to face in his successive servants, were collected, and shone, with more than mortal effulgence, in the face of his Son: "we beheld his glory, the glory as of the Only-begotten of the Father." In this new dispensation, **MIRACLES AND PROPHECIES** were blended. He predicted "things which should shortly come to pass," and things which are still fulfilling. "Never man spake as this man." "Since the world began" such mighty acts were never performed, such sublime doctrines were never taught, such elevated, such pure, such refined precepts, were never delivered. "He hath done all things well." "He magnified the law and made it honourable:" and suffering "the just for the unjust," he "brought in an everlasting salvation."

The peculiar evidences of the Saviour's mission continued in the hands of his immediate successors; and after a season these ceased also. The "working of miracles," the "discerning of spirits," the "divers kinds of tongues" were temporary; and "apostles, and prophets," after the first century yielded to "pastors and teachers." Then arose the testimony of **MARTYRS**: men, who, fired by apostolic example, and especially warmed by the love of Jesus, from Polycarp to these last days, have in succession sealed their testimony to the truth, and evinced their sincerity, with their blood. The liberality of our own times, has sanctioned freedom of inquiry, established liberty of conscience, and extinguished the fires of persecution. But now, infidelity rejects the testimony of our predecessors, to whom this "word of reconciliation" was first committed, and who have long since "fallen asleep." Skeptics demand some present sign in support of Divine revelation; and ask us to produce some present miracle, or some signal interposition, in favour of a cause which claims so high authority, as evidence, which they, removed as they are from its commencement, and its early testimonies, may be able to understand and to appreciate. We are prepared to answer even this demand: and we shall this evening produce a **STANDING MIRACLE** on the part of the Scriptures, in discussing—

#### THE PROPHECIES OF MOSES RESPECTING THE FORMER, AND THE PRESENT, STATE OF THE JEWS:

A miracle more striking than that which presented itself to him, when he beheld a "bush that burned with fire, and was not consumed." We allude to the *present* as well as to the former situation of the Jewish people; and for the confirmation of a large part of the subject of this evening, we shall only appeal to your senses.



You shall see a drop suffered to fall into the ocean, and preserved—floating entire, unmingled with the floods, and uninjured by storms perpetually agitating its troubled and boundless surface. You shall see “the lamp of God” kept alive and burning, amid convulsions which have shaken suns from their sphere, and tempests which have extinguished them. You shall see a people scattered abroad without a leader, survive every sort of oppression, and living to this hour, as numerous and as distinct as ever, while their conquerors are dead, and empires far superior in extent and power to their nation in its most renowned periods—which were also their victors—have perished.

The subject of this evening may justly excite interest, and claim pre-eminence over those which relate to other historical events; because the Jews were the favoured and the peculiar people of God. It was to punish their guilt, or to promote their prosperity, that other, and larger empires, conquered, or were destroyed. The haughty Nebuchadnezzar was but an instrument in the hand of God to scourge them; and all the purposes of his heart were subverted, whenever those purposes clashed with the Divine decisions respecting Israel. The amiable and victorious Cyrus, was conducted by an invisible hand, and directed by an unknown Power, to glory and conquest over Babylon, only to break the fetters of the Jews, and to restore them to their country. Had not the welfare of Israel, and the predictions of God, required it, the name of Cyrus had not been transmitted to us with the lustre that shines around it; and it is probable that even the eloquence of Xenophon had been lost to the world. We shall find, that upon the predictions respecting the Jews, depend the prophecies belonging to other, and to mightier nations; it is, therefore, proper to present them first to your attention.

There are several prophecies in relation to the Jews, which will not fall under our notice, for two or three reasons; and we mention them once for all. So extensive a field as the general consideration of the very numerous predictions respecting the house of Israel, would not accord with the conciseness of a course of Lectures professedly aiming at selection. Moreover, other prophecies, of an historical nature, principally relate to the Captivity—the restoration of the two tribes, and the loss of the ten. It is only necessary to observe, that they were exactly accomplished. At the end of seventy years, which was the time specified, the two tribes returned to their country: the ten were lost, but not annihilated; for some of them returned with their brethren. Yet all distinction is removed, and they are at the present moment blended and

incorporated with their brethren. No Jew is now able to trace the tribe whence he descends: so that if the Messiah were not really come, they now lack the evidences by which he could be known when he arrived, a part of which evidence, and a very considerable one, must rest upon his Genealogy, which always formed a distinct and impressive part of the prophecies relating to him. There is the less occasion to dwell here upon the question respecting the ten tribes, as it has already been discussed in the Lectures on Scripture Facts. Again—The prophecies which we pass by, were either connected with the Messiah, and will, therefore, demand our consideration in that connexion; or were local and temporary. They have received their accomplishment, and we have no farther interest in them. These, which we now press upon you, refer to events more recent; are of greater moment from their relation to Christianity; and some of them are capable of present evidence, because they are still fulfilling. We have also selected the prophecies of MOSES, which were conditional, and which, through the sins of the people, foreseen and foretold, became positive, both because they are farther removed from the events themselves, and because they are an epitome of predictions relating to the same subject, delivered afterwards more at large, by Isaiah, Jeremiah, and others. A paraphrase upon these verses will furnish us with the substance of subsequent and more amplified prophecies, in a narrow compass, and in a pointed manner.

There are two features peculiarly prominent in these predictions of Moses—DESOLATION, and DISPERSION,—the one accompanied by circumstances of the utmost cruelty, the other, by the most singular preservation. You are to observe,

### I. THE DESOLATION OF THE JEWS.

V. 49. *“The Lord shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth.”*—The REASON of this threatening is to be found in the verses which precede the selected passage. It proceeded on the principle of their alienation from God by wicked works. It is a useful lesson which this dreadful denunciation teaches us. The threatenings of God are always in the first instance conditional. “It shall come to pass if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day, that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee.” This is the line of divine vengeance, and man seals the condemnation which God exhibits as a guard upon his

evil passions.—It is a determined, and a continued, course of sin, that renders his threatened judgments positive. It is then that the “*if*” is blotted out, and a sad but sufficient reason is substituted—“*Because* I have called, and ye refused, I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded: But ye have set at naught all my counsel, and would none of my reproof; I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me. For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord. *Therefore*, shall they eat of the fruit of their own way; and be filled with their own devices.” A more terrible punishment than this cannot be imagined; and this reflection may serve to awaken to a sense of their danger some, who appear disposed to trifle with divine compassion “till the wrath of God arise, and there is no remedy.”

The DIRECTION of this threatening is to the sufferings inflicted upon the Jewish nation by the hand of the *Romans*. It appears to me absurd to fluctuate, in the application of this prophecy, between the Assyrians and the Romans: because it will apply to the first, only in those general features which might be accommodated to any great nation, while it accords with the last, in all those striking and minute particulars which characterize the whole passage.

“THE LORD *will bring*”——Behold, the Great Agent in these dreadful scenes! It has been justly remarked, that “temporal blessings when obedient, and temporal punishments when disobedient, are the terms of the Jewish covenant.”\* This position is capable of universal illustration, and is confirmed by every page of their history. In this also, consists one of its grand distinctions from the new covenant framed in Christianity, which refers rewards and punishments to another world. But in both cases, and under both covenants, the Agent is the same as the prophecy of Moses reveals. The Lord takes cognizance of transgressions which escape the eyes of the world. The violations of the rights of society, as well as of his law, fall under his scrutiny—“Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.” His wrath is as irresistible as it is just. “If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him: but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall entreat for him?” National judgments are the punishment of nation-

\* Kett on Prophecy, vol. i. p. 105.



al sins: and in the history of empires we see still present retributions, of so awful and impressive a nature, as to silence, in an hour of calm reflection, the doubts which skepticism has laboured to raise, respecting the superintendence of Providence, and which extort from the lip of conviction, "Verily, there is a God that ruleth in the earth." In the desolations which lay waste the fairest parts of the globe, we are sometimes compelled to see the hand of God lifted up: but who lays these things to heart? Man always is prone to stop short at second causes. He seldom regards more than the instrument. He is satisfied with deploring the effect. We are carried beyond these inferior considerations, in the passage before us. When it represents an enemy thundering at the gates of Jerusalem, it does not say, that they were attracted by the wealth, or envious of the greatness, of the Jews: that they came to punish acts of cruel aggression, or the infringement of treaties: that the thirst of insatiable ambition prevailed, even when no such provocations were given; because although all these were causes, they were only subordinate. Sin made God the enemy of the nation. And although the invading adversaries were their immediate scourge, they were only instrumental. The Agent is far superior. The favour of God is the defence of a country: not their monarchs and counsellors; not their treaties and alliances; not their chariots and horses; not their fortifications and navies—these are usually the *means* employed to support the existence and the prosperity of a country—but security rises from a higher source, and is preserved by divine and constant superintendence.

"*The Lord shall bring* A NATION against thee"—not a tribe, an army, a petty state, but a more powerful, a more terrible engine—a nation. When he will work, he can never lack instruments. The hearts of all men, and the forces of all kingdoms are at his disposal. He, who sometimes calls the locusts in swarms that darken the heavens and cover the earth, by the same word of power, when he chooses to punish with the sword, rouses the imperious hero to his contention, bows the haughty necks of kings to his yoke—and "a nation" rises, as with the heart of one man, to "avenge the Lord, and to ease him of his adversaries."

"*The Lord shall bring a nation against thee* FROM FAR—What is distance to him, before whom "Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low—the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain?"—When it is his purpose to raise up one nation to punish another, intervening mountains and forests, and seas, and continents are nothing. The Alps stretched between them, formed no defence to the people threat-

ened, and were no impediment to the invaders. We apprehend danger near at hand; but human foresight seldom extends to that which is remote. Here a nation is brought "*from far*." We do not always see the quarter from which destruction menaces us. The cloud may gather in the other hemisphere which is destined to rise and darken this—when it just emerges to our horizon, it appears above it "as a man's hand" in size and insignificance: every moment it becomes darker, wider, more portentous, till the heavens are overspread, and the tempest beats upon us without pity. This is a most striking and important feature in the prophecy—the Romans lay *very far* from Jerusalem.

——"*From the* END OF THE EARTH."—It is remarkable that the two great instruments\* of the destruction of the Jews as a nation, should both come, for that purpose, from Great Britain. It is well known, that in those days, Britain was esteemed and denominated "the end of the earth;" and it is probable, that under that very title we are the subject of several prophecies, relating to the kingdom of Christ, and to the spreading of the gospel. The soldiers of Cæsar were unwilling to follow him, to the conquest of this country; because they imagined that he was passing over the limits of the world. Could these men now be called from those graves in which they have slept more than eighteen centuries to witness the grandeur, the power, the glory of Britain: could they behold this little empire opposing, with her single strength, confederate nations, and in herself becoming the preponderance in the balance of the world; could they see her attracting, as to a centre, religion and science, and again distributing her collected rays of light, and truth, and life, to other—even the most distant lands—what would be their astonishment!

——"*As swift as* THE EAGLE FLIETH.—The eagle was the Roman standard. As an image, the eagle is the emblem of strength, of beauty, of celerity, and of majesty. Such a figure shadowed forth with singular felicity the distinguished characteristics of their conquerors. What withstood their arms? What opposed successfully their power? What resisted their progress? What subdued their valour? The ensign of Rome was planted in every quarter of the world, and in the heart of Jerusalem: "the abomination of desolation" was set up in the very bosom of its sanctuary. The flight of the eagle was an apt and forcible representation of the rapidity of their conquests: and on more occasions than one, the proud boast of their imperial commander, was more than an empty vaunt—"I came—I saw—I conquered!"—

\* Adrian and Vespasian.

——“*A nation, whose TONGUE thou shalt NOT UNDERSTAND.*—Again, the correspondence of the prophecy with the event is striking: and again the application of it to the Romans is confirmed. Is it not singular that Moses should represent the destroyers of the Jewish nation, a remote people, of strange language? Is it not an irresistible evidence that he was inspired? Had his language been founded upon mere conjecture, he would rather have supposed and affirmed, that their envious, jealous, powerful neighbours, would combine to destroy them—this was the more likely position. Had he designed only to terrify them by threatenings, while this last conjecture would have been built upon the broader basis of probability, it would have better answered this purpose: because the representation of an adversary near at hand, would have been more terrible, than the prediction of one more remote. Had he not been inspired to develope futurity, he never would have supposed that the Jews were to fall, in case of disobedience, by a distant, and not by a neighbouring, power. But the question is placed beyond all doubt, by the fact: and hypothesis is rendered nugatory by the exact accomplishment of the prophecy.

V. 50.—“*A nation of FIERCE COUNTENANCE.*—Who is not reminded of the language of Pyrrhus, king of Epirus, when he assisted the Tarentines, before the first Punic war? After a battle, in which he was victorious, and the Romans were defeated, he walked in the field crimsoned by human blood: and when he saw the wounds of the Romans all in front, and marked the fierceness of their countenance preserved even in death; he exclaimed, that “if he had such soldiers, or if he were their commander, he would subdue the whole world,” adding, that “such another victory would ruin him.” And here, before they were a people at all, they were expressly described “a nation of *fierce* countenance.”

——“*Which shall NOT REGARD the person of the OLD, nor show favour to the YOUNG.*—Another, and a horrible trait, of the Roman character, in their vindictive treatment of the Jews. The spirit of the Romans was a haughty, martial spirit: but I apprehend there can be furnished no parallel in their history, and in their conduct towards other nations, of that inflexible, unrelenting, indiscriminate cruelty, which they exercised towards the Jews. Titus, under whom the prediction received its full accomplishment, was mild, humane, and benevolent: the grateful history of his own times, and of those immediately succeeding, has embalmed his memory for posterity: but he seems, beloved as he was by his soldiers, at that moment to have lost all his authority: he could neither restrain the fury of the military against the wretched inha-



bitants of the city, nor preserve the temple from the flames kindled within its sacred walls by their blind and senseless rage; and he himself seems to have forgotten his usual clemency, and to have sacrificed, in that singular instance, his very humanity to resentment, in the dreadful number of crucifixions, which he either commanded or allowed, of the Jews who fell into his hands. The tears of innocence, the beauty of youth, the softness of female excellence, and the hoary head, were equally unavailing: and the strokes of mortality were dealt around with indiscriminate barbarity. What a fearful destroyer is man, when he is resigned to the impulse of his depraved passions! The most gentle and amiable dispositions, thus given over, become fierce, vindictive, untractable, and pitiless. It is a distinguished mercy to be delivered from ourselves: it is an unspeakable consolation to “fall into the hands of God,” and not to lie at the mercy of an imperious fellow-worm!

V. 51.—“*And he shall eat the fruit of thy cattle, and the fruit of thy land, until thou be destroyed: which also shall not leave thee either corn, wine, or oil, or the increase of thy kine, or flocks of thy sheep, until he have destroyed thee.*” The blessings and the bounties of providence are little esteemed, till they are withheld. We plant, and sow and increase, and eat the fruit of our labours—but how seldom we are affected by these mercies at the moment, or cherish the remembrance of them afterwards! Should we not feel lively gratitude, when the harvest is brought in, that an enemy has not been permitted to lay waste our fruitful fields, and to empurple our plains with our own blood? What hand secures and feeds us? And why are we not in the condition of those Jews, who planted, but eat not of the fruit of their vineyards; who sowed, but reaped not; who laboured, not for their families, but for a cruel and merciless foe? When shall we be wise, and understand these things? Our bread has been given us, and our water has been sure. The drought has not consumed our corn, nor famine wasted our stores. The pestilence has not depopulated our cities, nor the sword stained our soil with the crimson current of human life. He hath not so dealt with other nations. War has raved round us on every side: but its very sound has died away at the foot of our native cliffs. Here, the throne of despotism has been reared upon the ruins of liberty, and upon multitudes slain: there, the earth has refused to repay the toil of the husbandman. In this empire, war ravages its towns and its plantations: in that, the malignant fever shakes its desolating scourge over the wasted people. O Britain, “forget not all thy benefits!” Whose heart does not overflow with joy, and thankfulness this night, when he contrasts the situation of his menaced

but tranquil country, with the representations of this passage, and with the condition of the nations by which she is surrounded?

V. 52.—“*And he shall besiege thee in all thy gates, until thy high and fenced walls come down, wherein thou trustedst, throughout all thy land: and he shall besiege thee in all thy gates, throughout all thy land which the Lord thy God hath given thee.*” At the time when this prophecy was delivered, Israel was not in possession of Canaan: for Moses never passed Jordan, nor set foot in the promised land. The Jews had no cities, no gates, no high and fenced walls, nothing to excite their confidence, or to answer the outline of the prediction. It related altogether to things which did not then exist; and which, so far as mere human foresight was concerned, might never be. But the event justified the prophecy. Jerusalem was a fortified place of prodigious strength: it became the boast of the Jews; and at the time to which the passage alludes was taken with so much difficulty, that Titus acknowledged it would have been impracticable, had not God fought against the city. In former periods of their history it was very formidable: but sin undermines the strongest fortifications; and it was repeatedly wasted as a punishment to its inhabitants. When the arm of God is with a nation, “one shall chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight:” when the arm of God is against an empire, vain is their strength, and vain are their resources; “they shall flee when no one pursueth”—they shall be chased as the down of the thistle before the whirlwind.

V. 53. “*And thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons and of thy daughters (which the Lord thy God hath given thee) in the siege and in the straitness wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee.*”—Unnatural as this representation may appear, it was literally accomplished. Ah, little do we know, surrounded as we are by plenty, what are the horrors of famine, and to what extremities human nature may be driven. I recollect it is one of the just, but horrible pictures, of famine, in the prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah, that “every man shall eat the flesh of his own arm;” and there do not want instances that answer the description. One circumstance, unparalleled in the annals of human affliction, ‘take it for all in all,’ is related by Josephus, when he recorded the siege to which Moses seems directly to refer: a case so full of cruelty, a violation of the feelings of nature so extraordinary, an act from the perpetration of which imagination revolts with so much horror, that he not only relates it with reluctance, but affirms he would not have related it at all, because he could not expect to be believed, had there not survived, at the moment when he gave his history to the world, many respectable per-

sons who could attest it. A woman of high consideration, who, therefore, exactly corresponded with the description of Moses, slew her own child with a design to eat him. What must have been a mother's sufferings, before she was impelled to such an act! She dressed the body in secret, lest her neighbours, urged by famine, should break in upon her, and deprive her by force of her unnatural food. The smell of flesh dressed could not, however, be suppressed; her house was actually forced by her neighbours: but when they saw the mangled body of the child half-devoured, and understood, that, driven to desperation, a mother's hand had committed this atrocious outrage upon nature, horror subdued even the force of famine, and having stood a few dreadful moments suspended in fear, they withdrew, and left her to complete her barbarous meal alone! But so was it predicted: "The tender and delicate woman among you, which would not adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground, for delicateness and tenderness, her eye shall be evil toward the husband of her bosom, and toward her son, and toward her daughter, and toward her children which she shall bear, for she shall *eat them*, for want of all things, *secretly*, in the siege, and straitness wherewith thine enemy shall distress thee in thy gates;" and with this horrible picture we will close the affecting scene of JEWISH DESOLATION.

The succeeding part of the prophecy applies to,

II. THE DISPERSION OF THE JEWS; and to their sufferings in that state; the state in which they continue to this hour.

V. 64. "*And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other.*"—This circumstance forms a powerful sanction to the determination with which we commenced this Lecture, to consider the prophecy only in reference to one event and to one people: for although in preceding captivities they were partially scattered abroad, yet this dispersion was never universal and permanent, the fixed characters of it in this passage, till "the Romans came, and took away their place and nation." But then the Lord visited the sins of the fathers upon their children, whose personal and transcendent guilt filled the measure of their iniquities as a people; and all the righteous blood which had been shed from Abel to Christ, came upon that generation. They were driven from Jerusalem in all directions; and to this hour have never been allowed to inhabit their metropolis; nor can even the outline of their city be traced with any degree of accuracy. Their country is in the hands of their enemies; very few Jews are permitted to remain in it, and those are aliens, for they have no possessions there. While it is overrun with Turks,



Greeks, Christians, Moors, and Arabians; the original proprietors of this wasted track are dispersed in the East, in Europe, in Africa, in the West Indies, among all nations, and literally “from the one end of the earth even unto the other.”

“*And then thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even wood and stone.*” Persecution for conscience sake, and compulsive worship, are manifestly the features of this threatening; whatever humiliating circumstances are particularly intended, as they are expressed only in general terms, we do not presume to insist upon facts beyond the general outline of the prediction. In Spain and Portugal they have severely suffered on this account; and to save themselves from the fire, they have been compelled both to renounce, in those countries, the religion of their fathers, and to bow before the images of the saints; which we, as well as they, deem idolatry. They dare not even secretly practise the seal of circumcision, for fear of possible discovery.\* There are no Jews there, because there are none that dare avow themselves such. “In vain” (says an able writer†) “the great lords of Spain make alliances, change their names, and take ancient scutcheons, they are still known to be of Jewish race, and Jews themselves. The convents of monks and nuns are full of them. Most of the canons, inquisitors, and bishops proceed from this nation.”‡ Such has been the fact; the recent changes on the continent may enable them to remove this disgusting veil of hypocrisy.

Gibbon has related, with his wonted force and eloquence, a terrible persecution which they endured in Spain, on account of religion, so early as the seventh century, under “Sisebut, a Gothic king. Ninety thousand Jews were compelled to receive the sacrament of baptism; the fortunes of the obstinate infidels were confiscated, their bodies tortured; and it seems doubtful whether they were permitted to abandon their native country. The excessive zeal of the catholic king was moderated, even by the clergy of Spain, who solemnly pronounced an inconsistent sentence: *that* the sacraments should not be forcibly imposed; but *that* the Jews who had been baptized should be constrained for the honour” (read the *dishonour*) “of the church, to persevere in the external practice of a religion which they disbelieved and detested. Their frequent relapses provoked one of the successors of Sisebut to banish the whole nation from his dominions; and a council of Toledo published a decree, that every Gothic king should swear to

\* Anc. Univ. Hist. vol. x. chap. ii. p. 73. Note G.

† Limboret.

‡ See Bp. Newton, vol. I. Dissert. vii. p. 108.

maintain this salutary edict. But the tyrants were unwilling to dismiss the victims, whom they delighted to torture; or to deprive themselves of the industrious slaves, over whom they might exercise a lucrative oppression. The Jews still continued in Spain, under the weight of the civil and ecclesiastical laws, which in the same country have been faithfully transcribed in the code of the *Inquisition*. The Gothic kings and bishops at length discovered, that injuries will produce hatred, and that hatred will find the opportunity of revenge. A nation, the secret or professed enemies of Christianity, *still multiplied in servitude and distress*; and the intrigues of the Jews promoted the rapid success of the Arabian conquerors.”\*

V. 65.—“*And among these nations thou shalt find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest.*” Besides the storm of persecution which we have just recalled to your recollection, in the thirteenth century they were banished from England: in the fourteenth from France; in the fifteenth again from Spain; afterwards from Portugal; and still more recently from Bohemia. It had been said in the twenty-ninth verse of this chapter—“Thou shalt be only oppressed, and *spoiled* evermore.” Without looking farther, the history of our own country will furnish us with some terrible examples of their oppressions, both in respect of their persons and their property. Richard the First, whose reign was what the world calls glorious, but whose chief excellence was personal valour, sullied by a variety of bad qualities; was proud and vindictive; and his government oppressive and arbitrary. The Jews felt the weight of these evils in an extraordinary measure. He forbade them to appear at his coronation; and because some, in confidence of the presents which they had made him, presumed to disobey, a general massacre of the Jews commenced by the populace, which if he did not command, he took no trouble to restrain. From London the persecuting spirit fled through other cities; and in York, “five hundred of that nation, who had retired into the castle for safety, and found themselves unable to defend the place, murdered their own wives and children, threw the dead bodies over the walls upon the populace, and then setting fire to the houses, perished in the flames.”† In the weak and turbulent reign of John, a character infamous for cowardice, for oppression, and for murder, whose life is a stain to the English history, but from whose hand liberty wrested her celebrated charter, the oppressions of the Jews were renewed, and were directed immediately towards their property.

\* Gibbon's, Rome, Vol. VI. chap. xxxvii. p. 303, 304, 8vo. edit.

† Hume's England, Vol. II. chap. x. p. 178, 179. 12mo. edit.

One of our best historians says, that they “were entirely out of the protection of the law, were extremely odious to the bigotry of the people, and were abandoned to the immeasurable rapacity of the king and of his ministers. Besides many other indignities to which they were continually exposed, it appears that they were once all thrown into prison, and the sum of sixty-six thousand marks exacted for their liberty. At different times, from five Jews only, was extorted, by this tyrant, 16,600 marks.” In the succeeding reign of Henry the Third, whose incapacity for government was at least equalled by his rapacity towards the Jews, this unhappy people were repeatedly spoiled and destroyed—“The king borrowed 5000 marks of the earl of Cornwall, and for his repayment consigned over to him all the Jews in England:” but I am weary of reciting evidences so plainly illustrative of that cruel treatment which Moses foretold in their dispersion.\* At one time, in the reign of Edward the First, “no less than 15,000 of them were robbed of their effects, and banished the kingdom.”† A still more terrible calamity overtook them in different countries and at different times, but especially in Spain and Portugal, where religious toleration is not known, and where the Jews have always suffered most severely, they have not been suffered to have the education of their own children, who were taken from them, and brought up in monasteries to which their parents could have no access. This also had been foretold (v. 32.) “Thy sons and thy daughters shall be given unto another people, and thine eyes shall look, and fail with longing for them all the day long.” Such were their various oppressions: but the prophet now turns their eyes upon their anguish of spirit.

——“*But the Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind.*” What a terrible picture is here of the visitations of the Almighty, when he makes requisition for sin! He can not only seal up the springs of external comfort, but eclipse the sunshine of the spirit with ten thousand nameless apprehensions. “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God!” “A trembling heart!”—what an evil! Disease may yield to the power of medicine: but who, besides himself, can heal the spirit which God has wounded? Calamity is usually confined to time, and death is a shelter from the roughest day: but this is a sorrow which passes the limits of life, and the palsy of terror rages with increasing violence, as the present turbulent scene hastens to

\* See Hume’s England, Vol. II. Appendix, 2, p. 319. Vol. III. chap. i. p. 61, 62—90 and 91.

† Ditto, p. 101—103.



close, because, dying under divine displeasure, a more terrible, and an unalterable state of being, commences. Follow yonder smitten rebel, who carries the arrows of God every where rankling in his conscience! He droops even while he is encompassed by the blessings of life, a prey to tormenting reflections, to the scorpion stings of self-accusation, to the multiplying terrors of despair. His cheek grows pale, his eye waxes dim, his body wastes, his strength melts away, under the pressure of a disease which art cannot reach, a disease the seat of which is in his heart. This is the delineation of Moses, this was the lot of the Jews in many affecting instances: do you shudder at the scenery? Take heed to yourselves! the same artillery is still planted against the head of guilt, and a punishment no less terrible awaits present rebellion, although perhaps unseen, and future in its execution. “He that being often reprov’d, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.”

V. 66.—“*And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life.*” God rides in the whirlwind, and directs the tempest. The ball, that is discharged from yonder cloud fraught with electricity, is overruled by the unerring hand of Heaven, and obeys its destination to smite the desert or the city, the mountain or the spire, the house, or the tree, or the traveller that seeks a shelter under it. With God at our right hand, amid the changes of life, or the terrors of death, we shall not be greatly moved. When his inspiring presence is withdrawn, in vain we seek repose, and woo prosperity. A curse follows us into the city and into the field; at home and abroad; into our families and into our possessions; in-all that we have, and all that we perform. Thus are these deserted people exhibited as having “none assurance of their lives.” You have already seen, what just reason they had to fear, from their frequent sufferings. Josephus estimates, that one million, two hundred and forty thousand, four hundred and ninety, perished at once in Jerusalem and in Judea.

Ver. 67.—“*In the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were even! and at even thou shalt say, Would God it were morning! for the fear of thine heart wherewith thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see!*” A lively picture of restless agony! A moving description of feelings which must necessarily arise out of their desolate and precarious circumstances! It was announced “thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a by-word, among all nations whither the Lord shall lead thee.” I need not remind you that these words are faithful and true. They are subjects of con-

stant derision to one part of the community, and of disgust to others. Their very persons are deemed odious; and every evil and unworthy passion is ascribed to them, from the most insatiable avarice to the most inflexible hardness of heart. If we wish to fix a stigma upon a man's character, it is only necessary to say, "he is a Jew," and society will feel the reproach, and be ready to brand all his transactions. They are objects of compassion, and subjects for your prayers: sin lies at the root of their degradation; and even now they have not lost all the impress of God's hand-writing. Let the complaint, extorted by misery, be a lesson to the children of prosperity, who sometimes use correspondent language from the mere lassitude of indolence: should God shower his plagues upon them, as he has done formerly upon this devoted people, they would feel the misery which at present they mock with their murmurings.

V. 68.—"*And the Lord shall bring thee into Egypt again with ships, by the way whereof I spake unto thee, thou shalt see it no more again: and there ye shall be sold unto your enemies for bond-men and for bond-women, and no man shall buy you.*" Perhaps this intends that their sufferings should be as oppressive as their former Egyptian bondage; and even be attended by cruelties more aggravating. But, from the best authorities, we collect enough to be persuaded that this point of the prophecy also received a literal accomplishment. It is probable that a large proportion of them were carried thither by the Romans, who had a fleet in the Mediterranean.\* It is certain, from the testimony of Josephus, that at the command of Titus many were thus transported; and so little were they esteemed, that eleven thousand of them were suffered to perish with want.† Such was the glut of the market, that thirty Jews were offered for sale for one small piece of money; and even then sometimes purchasers could not be found.

Such were the predictions of their distinguished Lawgiver respecting the desolation and the dispersion of the Jews, predictions re-echoed by all their prophets in succession, and which, upon the testimony of impartial history, have been so completely accomplished. We ask you to review the representations of this evening, and to say whether their present existence and population, in circumstances of such singular disadvantage, and through so long a period, of such singular oppression, among all nations, can be deemed less than a standing miracle, demonstrating the superintendence of providence, the faith of prophecy, and by deduction, the truth and the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures? At the close of so many years from

\* Newton on the Proph. vol. i. Dissert. 7, p. 102.

† Jos. Bell. Jud. lib. vi. c. 9, &c. p. 1291. See also the note at the end.

their dispersion, and in defiance of such cruel measures employed against them, "one million are supposed to be resident in the various provinces of Turkey, three hundred thousand in Persia, India, and China, and seventeen hundred thousand in Europe, Africa, and America. Their outward condition and circumstances are generally tolerable, except in Portugal and Spain."\* And it is now probable that the hand of persecution will be stayed even in those countries, from the policy hitherto pursued by that power to which those empires are at present likely to be subjected.

God had said that he "would not destroy them utterly," even in their lowest estate, nor "break his covenant with them:" and their distinction from all people forms a leading feature in their dispersion and preservation. It is the distinction of nature, as well as habits and circumstances. Nor is this less miraculous than their preservation itself. The laborious and pious Prelate, who has poured so much light upon this subject and upon prophecy at large, argues here with his wonted plainness and conviction. "No people have continued unmixed so long as they have done, not only of those who have sent forth colonies into foreign countries, but even of those who have abided in their own country. The northern nations have come in swarms into the more southern parts of Europe; but where are they now to be discerned and distinguished? The Gauls went forth in great bodies to seek their fortune in foreign parts; but what traces or footsteps of them are now remaining any where? In France, who can separate the race of the ancient Gauls from the various other people who from time to time have settled there? In Spain, who can distinguish exactly between the first possessors, the Spaniards, the Goths, and the Moors, who conquered and kept possession of the country for some ages? In England, who can pretend to say with certainty, which families are derived from the ancient Britons, and which from the Romans, or Saxons, or Danes, or Normans? The most ancient and honourable pedigrees can be traced up only to a certain period, and beyond that there is nothing but conjecture and uncertainty, obscurity and ignorance: but the Jews can go up higher than any nation, they can even deduce their pedigree from the beginning of the world. They may not know from what particular tribe or family they are descended, but they know certainly that they all sprang from the stock of Abraham. And yet the contempt with which they have been treated, and the hardships which they have undergone in almost all countries, should, one would think, have made them desirous to forget or renounce their original: but they profess it, they glory in it: and after so many wars, massacres, and persecu-

\* Kett on Proph. vol. i. chap. iv. p. 120. Note.



tions, they still subsist;" they subsist in the full evidence of distinction—"they still are very numerous: and what but a supernatural power," *constantly*, and *still* exerted, "could have preserved them in such a manner as none other nation upon earth hath been preserved?"\* and in such circumstances as no other nation upon earth hath ever been placed.

The Jews are thus distinguished and preserved for better times. Jesus is sent not merely for the fall," but also "for the rising again of Israel." The fulness of the Gentiles and the gathering in of the Jews shall arrive together; "and there shall be one fold and one shepherd." O ye wandering, dispersed children of Abraham! we pity your low estate! we long to infold you in the arms of Christian communion! we anticipate, we wait, and we pray for the day when ye shall "turn again to your strong hold:" when "ye shall look upon him whom ye have pierced, and mourn:" when ye shall say, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!" "O that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion! when God bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad!"

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## NOTES.

### NOTES TO THE SEVENTH LECTURE.

IN confirmation of that which has been advanced in the preceding Lecture, are the following extracts from Josephus: τὰς γὰρ δημοτικὰς καταλιπόντες μόνους, τὸν ἄλλον ὄχλον ἐπώλην συν γυναιξὶ καὶ τέκνοις, ἐλαχίστης τιμῆς ἕκαστον, πληθεῖ τε τῶν πιπρασκομένων, καὶ ὀλιγότητι τῶν ἀναιμένων. καί περ δὲ προκηρύξας μηδένα μόνον αὐτομολεῖν, ὅπως καὶ γενεὰς ἐξαγάγοιεν, ὁμῶς καὶ τὰς τὰς ἐδέχετο. ἐπέστησε μὲν τοὶ τὰς διακρινομένης ἀπ' αὐτῶν, εἴ τις εἴη κολάσεως ἄξιος, καὶ τῶν μὲν ἀπεμποληθέντων ἄπειρον τὸ πλῆθος ἦν.—"Leaving only the common people, they sold the rest, with their wives and children, for an *inconsiderable price*, on account of the *multitudes exposed to sale*, and the *paucity of buyers*, although he had issued an edict, that none should flee to him singly, intending thereby to obtain also their families, yet he received these also, appointing some to inquire who were worthy of punishment, and to inflict it on them, and an *infinite multitude were sold*." *Joseph. de Bello Jud. lib. vi. cap. 8, sect. 2, p. 1288. Hud. edit.* What a striking illustration of the prophecy—"Ye shall be sold unto your enemies for bondmen and bondwomen, and no man shall buy you." Of their transmission to Egypt, the indignities they suffered, and the immense slaughter of the captive Jews, he says, ὁ δὲ τὰς μὲν σπασίῳδεις καὶ ληστρῆς πάντας, ὑπ' ἀλλήλων ἐνδεικνυμένους, ἀπέκτεινε· τῶν δὲ νέων τὰς ὑψηλοτάτας καὶ καλὰς ἐπιλέξας ἐτήρει τῷ θριάμβῳ· τὰ δὲ λοιπὰ πλεῖστας τὰς ὑπὲρ ἐπ' ἡκαίδεκα ἔτη θησας ἐπέμψεν εἰς τὰ κατ' Αἰγυπτίον ἔργα, πλείους δ' εἰς τὰς ἐπαρχίας διεδωρησατο Τίτος, φθαρσομένους ἐν τοῖς θεάτροις σιδηρῶ καὶ θηρίοις. οἱ δ' ἐν τὸς ἐπ' ἡκαίδεκα ἔτων ἐπράθησαν. ἐφθάρησαν δ' αὐτῶν ἐν αἷς διέκρινεν ὁ Φερόνταν

\* Bp. Newton on the Proph. vol. i. Dissert. viii. p. 118, 119.

ημέραις ὑπ' ἐνδείας, χίλιοι πρὸς τοῖς μυρίοις, ὅς μὲν ὑπὸ μίσθης τῶν φυλακῶν μη μεταλαμβάνοντες τροφῆς, οἱ δ' ἔτι προστιμένοι διδομένην. πρὸς δὲ τὸ πλεῖθος ἦν ἐνδεία καὶ σίτου. "All the seditious and the robbers, who were betrayed by mutual treachery, he slew: but certain chosen youths, who excelled the rest in stature and in beauty of configuration, he reserved to grace the triumph. The whole remaining multitude, above 17 years of age, he sent bound into Egypt as slaves for hard labour. Titus also dispersed many of them through the provinces to be destroyed by the sword, or by wild beasts, in the theatres. Those who were under seventeen years were sold. During the time they were under the control of Fronto, 12,000 died of hunger, partly from the hatred of their keepers, who gave them nothing to eat, partly that some refused food when it was offered them; and, indeed, there was now a scarcity of provision, because of the multitude."

*Jos. Bell. Jud. lib. vi. cap. 9, sect. 2, p. 1291. Hud. edit.*

In summing up the whole loss, he says, Τῶν μὲν γὰρ αἰχμαλώτων πάντων, ὅσα καθ' ὅλον ἐληφθῆ τὸν πόλεμον, ἀριθμὸς ἐννέα μυριάδες καὶ ἑπτακισχίλιοι συνηχθῆ τῶν δ' ἀπολυμένων κατὰ πᾶσαν τὴν πολιορκίαν, μυριάδες εκατὸν καὶ δέκα. "The number of captives taken during the time of the whole war, was ninety-seven thousand; but of all that perished during the time of the entire siege, eleven millions."

*Jos. Bell. Jud. lib. vi. cap. 9, sect. 3, p. 1291. Hud. edit.*

## LECTURE VIII.

PROPHECIES RESPECTING BABYLON, TYRE, THE FORMER AND THE PRESENT  
STATE OF EGYPT.

## ISAIAH XIII. 19—22.

And BABYLON, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there. But wild beasts of the desert shall be there, and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures, and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there. And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces: and her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged.

EZEK. XXVI. 3—6. Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I am against thee, O TYRUS, and will cause many nations to come up against thee, as the sea causeth his waves to come up, and they shall destroy the walls of Tyrus, and break down her towers; I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her like the top of a rock. It shall be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea: for I have spoken it, saith the Lord God, and it shall become a spoil to the nations. And her daughters which are in the field shall be slain by the sword, and they shall know that I am the Lord.

EZEK. XXIX. 14, 15. I will bring again the captivity of EGYPT, and will cause them to return into the land of Pathros, into the land of their habitation, and they shall be there a base kingdom. It shall be the basest of the kingdoms, neither shall it exalt itself any more among the nations: for I will diminish them, that they shall no more rule over the nations.

By many laborious and learned researches, the truth of this volume has been proved, its antiquity demonstrated, and its claims to inspiration established. Amidst the mass of evidence furnished by science yielding her treasures to the great and good cause of religion; and while the weight of solid literature has in a variety of instances been roused to crush the feeble, superficial, imposing objections of modern skepticism, which rather wishes the volume it opposes not to be true, than hopes to prove it false; a few plain considerations may be produced to advantage by inferior talents, and those perhaps more satisfactory to a plain understanding, because better comprehended, than more laborious investigation. The



pretensions of modern philosophy, and the virulent but vain attacks which have been made, at the close of the eighteenth, and the commencement of the nineteenth centuries, upon the divinity of Christianity, have produced a most beneficial effect: they have excited the efforts of men of different powers, have placed the invincible evidences of revealed religion in all their various lights and bearings, and have convinced the unprejudiced that there is no reason why the hearts of those concerned for the sanctuary should tremble for the ark of God. In presuming to put forth our hand to stay it amid the rude assaults by which the malignity of man has attempted to shake it, not with the temerity of Uzzah, but impelled by a sense of official duty, we have never professed to do more than to endeavour to render plain those able arguments which are sometimes either difficult of access, or difficult to understand; and to strike out from the various subjects such practical inferences as may be useful and instructive.

Imagine, then, a number of men combining to palm upon the world a volume which they wish to be received as something more than of human composition. They would be anxious to adorn it with every possible attraction; and they would not merely aim at regularity, but endeavour to polish it into the most perfect symmetry. It would never occur to them to mingle history, legislation, prophecy, poetry, and epistolary compositions in such a production. They would be afraid of crushing their scheme by destroying its unity; and of exposing their design by the absence of that, which in human estimation is harmony and proportion. In effect they must fail, without the most perfect co-operation, when it is scarcely credible they should attain even momentary success with it; and such a production would be totally dissimilar to all the characteristics of the Scriptures. The various branches of the inspired writings, and their great difference of style and of circumstances prove, that they were not the composition of one man, or of any body of men at one time, or even in any one age. Besides the external evidences deducible from history and chronology, it is manifest from the book itself, that it was written at different times, in different languages, under different circumstances, and by men who were so far removed from each other, that they had not even the opportunity of collusion.

The same may be said of the New Testament, which infidelity accuses of being framed out of the materials of the ancient Jewish writings. Had the apostles desired to seduce the world by a scheme so nefarious, and had a handful of uneducated men been

capable of doing it, they also would have aimed at systematic and regular composition. Not to say that any attempt on their part to build a fictitious tale upon the basis of obscure predictions must have been frustrated and defeated by their contemporaries: not to urge that the forgery might have been easily detected and exposed, because every man was adequate to prove or to disprove a question which turned upon matter of fact: every man knew at the time, whether there was such a character as Jesus Christ, and whether the succession of circumstances related of him did really take place—to wave this argument, the nature of the composition itself proves the imputed imposition impossible. Whoever should have attempted it must have betrayed in their writings incessant efforts at consistency; or have made the several parts of their production so incongruous, that their falsehood would have been detected by want of that unity which is essential to truth, however various and even dissimilar the forms in which it is produced and stated. There must have been a uniformity too exact, or too little agreement. But the Scriptures bear all the marks of composition by different writers, with sufficient harmony to prove their analogy with, and their dependence upon, each other; and sufficient diversity to establish the impossibility of deception.

The same mode of reasoning will apply to the subject immediately in hand—prophecy. If the events insisted upon, as agreeing with these predictions, had been forged, it would have been easy to have made them correspond, as it appears to our judgment, more entirely; or if, as some have intimated, contrary to the most decisive evidence, the professed prophecies had been framed out of historical events after they had taken place, then had it been reasonable to suppose that the impostor would have made the oracle more luminous, and those obscurities which now occasionally perplex us had not existed. There is a sufficient correspondence between the prediction and its historical fact to identify their respective analogy; and sufficient obscurity to determine that the prophecy was indeed written before the event, and that it formed a part of the divine plan, to make the history the only satisfactory solution of the prediction.

The PROPHECIES which form the subject of discussion for this evening, relate to BABYLON, TYRE, THE FORMER AND THE PRESENT STATE OF EGYPT: and we shall take them up in the order in which they have been announced.

## I. BABYLON.

At the time when Isaiah wrote those singular and affecting words which are to pass under review in the course of this Lecture, Babylon was not a declining, decaying state, but a mighty empire, every day augmenting its resources, enlarging its dominion, adding to its energies, and rising into more marked distinction. To judge from its situation, at the moment when the prophecy was pronounced, and long afterward, human reason and foresight would have pronounced its increasing greatness, and not its utter ruin. It did not attain the summit of its glory till more than a century afterward; for such is the distance of time between Hezekiah, in whose reign this prediction was delivered, and Nebuchadnezzar, under whose auspices Babylon reached the utmost point of her prosperity. But the doom, thus proclaimed before she had touched the zenith of her dignity, was repeated by Isaiah, reiterated by succeeding prophets, re-echoed in the ears of Nebuchadnezzar himself, by Daniel, when he was called to interpret some singular revelations which God had been pleased to make to this monarch. Immediately succeeding the passage which is now to employ your thoughts, a most eloquent and inimitable triumph over this vast empire is put into the mouth of Israel: the very cedars and fir trees of Lebanon share the universal joy which is anticipated; and by one of those bold and striking personifications to be found in their full beauty only in the Scriptures, are represented raising the anthem at the fall of its king. "The whole earth is at rest and is quiet; they break forth into singing. Yea, the fir trees rejoice at thee, and the cedars of Lebanon, saying, Since thou art laid down no feller is come up against us." It would be a delightful occupation to follow this beautiful description, carried on with unrivalled felicity, throughout; the agitation and commotion of the invisible world at his approach; the great men, once the kings of the earth, now the shadows of their former selves, exhibiting a gratification that he who outstripped their majesty now shares their weakness; the contrast between his former grandeur, and his present degradation; between his boasting and his ruin; the just visitation of his acts upon his own head; and the righteous dispensation of God in overwhelming the waster with utter desolation; every thing relating to this whole master-piece of composition, whether imagery or sentiment, dignity of conception or force of expression, is inimitable; and the entire passage would amply repay an enlarged examination of its excellencies, but that it belongs to another depart-



ment than Lectures on Scripture Prophecy to point out beauties of style, and would lead us too far from the immediate object of our present meeting.\* When Babylon had attained her height of power and renown, the visions of Nebuchadnezzar admonished him of that termination of this mighty empire which we are now about to contemplate: so that from the commencement of the denunciations against it, to the very period of their completion, the clear and strong representations of prophecy never ceased.

We shall attempt to prove, that the Instruments, the Time the Method, the Consequences of the event were all distinctly foretold, with its entire Desolation. Permit us to request your attention to each of these particulars.

I. The INSTRUMENTS by which the ruin of Babylon was to be effected were foretold. The conqueror himself was expressly named, more than a century before his birth. And with no less precision his character is delineated. Xenophon himself, who wrote his history, never exhibited him as an invincible hero in stronger terms than Isaiah. He was to come flushed with conquest to the subjugation of this vast city; and from vanquished nations he was to go up against an empire which had forged chains for all its neighbours. Accordingly, Xenophon enumerates fourteen nations which he either subdued by the force of arms, or which submitted to him, and over which he reigned, besides Babylon.† “Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to *Cyrus*, whose right hand I have holden to *subdue nations*.”‡ And without any great exaggeration to increase the pomp of his style, at the head of his decree in favour of the Jews, he writes—“Thus saith Cyrus, king of Persia, the Lord God of heaven hath given me *all the kingdoms of the earth*.”§

It must be admitted that the prediction is sufficiently clear respecting the principal instrument: it was no less so respecting those which were subordinate. It was not to be subdued by Medes alone, neither by Persians alone, but both these were to form the destroying army, under one leader. The command was “Go up, O Elam,” the ancient name of Persia, “besiege, O Media.” Cyrus, as king of the Persians, employed his own forces; and the Medes were consigned to his command in this expedition by their monarch, to whom he was related by double ties of consanguinity.||

2. The TIME was determined and described with the same accuracy. It was to take place by night, a night of festivity, a night

\* See Is. xiv. 4—20.

† See Xen. Cyrop. vol. I. lib. i. p. 9, edit. Hutchinson, 12mo.; also, note at the end.

‡ Is. xlv. 1.

§ Ezra, i. 2.

|| He was his nephew and his son-in-law.

of riot and of intemperance. "Prepare the table, watch in the watch-tower, eat, drink: arise, ye princes, and anoint the shield." Thus, the monarch, over whom destruction lowered, was to encourage his nobles in the heart of his palace, against the fightings around his city, and the fears within it. Or, as a learned Prelate\* has better rendered the passage—"The table is prepared, the watch is set; they eat, they drink:" in which case the prophet speaks in his own person, and discovers in vision the scenes of that eventful night. But in either translation, nor merely the time, but its circumstances are clearly anticipated. The confusion and terror which seized these sons of riot in the midst of their noise, the commotion which followed the apparition of the hand-writing on the wall of the palace, the strong contrast between their mirth and their horror, especially in the person and feelings of the king, are all described with such power by the prophet, as not only to make us share the terror, but almost to imagine him a spectator of the event, which took place when he was sleeping in his grave. "Therefore, are my loins filled with pains; pangs have taken hold upon me as the pangs of a woman that travaileth: *I am convulsed, so that I cannot hear: I am astonished, so that I cannot see.* My heart panted, fearfulness affrighted me: the night of my pleasure hath he turned into fear unto me."† Such is the prediction: listen, now, to the history. "Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand." "They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone. In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaster of the wall of the king's palace; and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote. Then the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another. The king *cried aloud* to bring in the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers."‡ And it is remarkable that the silence, the dismay, the inability of these very men, upon whom he placed so much dependence, to save him, was foretold as clearly as all the other circumstances of the night. "Thou art wearied in the multitude of thy counsels: let now the astrologers, the star-gazers, the monthly prognosticators stand up, and save thee from these things that shall come upon

\* Bp. Lowth's Trans. of Is. chap. xxi. v. 5. The verbs are in the infinitive mode absolute. See his notes upon the chapter, pages 120 and 165: on chap. xxxii. 11, of the same prophet, 4to. edit.

† Is. xxi. 3, 4. The portion of the quotation printed in *italics* is Bp. Lowth's Translations, which I adopted, because it appeared to me to preserve the unity of the passage better than the common one.

‡ Dan. v. 1, and 4—7.

thee.”\* The defiance is an assertion of their impotence. The cowardice of the king and of his court, the dismay which turned their faces pale, and oppressed their heart with an agony of terror, contrasted with their blasphemy, their security, and their defiance of God, exhibited but a moment before, demonstrate with astonishing force the slender foundation upon which that proud structure, the confidence of the wicked, is elevated; and should be received as a solemn admonition to those despisers who now behold and wonder, but who will lose all their courage in the day that they perish.

3. The MANNER of the taking of the city was no less clearly predicted. First, the river was to be dried up: God promises, I will say “to the deep, Be dry; and I will dry up the rivers;” and this is declared in reference to *Cyrus*,” whom he calls his “shepherd.”† The way in which this prophecy was accomplished in the diversion of the course of the Euphrates, which ran through the city, by the order of Cyrus, has already been stated much at large, on a former occasion,‡ and there is the less reason to dwell upon it here. Then, the brazen gates were to be left open. “Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus—I will loose the loins of kings to open before him the two-leaved gates, *and the gates shall not be shut*. I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron.”§ But for the oversight of the Babylonians, as Herodotus, who was only acquainted with second causes, said, and we with much more propriety (after a contemplation of this singular prophecy, delivered more than a century before the event) may say, but for the promised interposition of Providence, all must have failed. Had the brazen gates which led to the river been closed, as it was guarded on both its banks by walls of the same height and strength as those which surrounded the city, the drying of the river had been in vain; the Babylonians from their walls might have poured down death in a thousand shapes upon the invaders, “the Persians, would have been taken as in a net,”|| and none could have escaped. The assault was to be on *two* sides of the city, north and south. It is a wonderful circumstance that the prophecy should descend to particulars so minute. “One post shall run to *meet another*, and one messenger to *meet another*, to show the king of Babylon that his city is *taken at one end*,” or, is taken

\* Is. xlvii. 13.

† Is. xlv. 27, 28.

‡ See Lect. on Scripture Facts, p. 245, 246.

§ Is. xlv. 1, 2.

|| Herod. Lib. 1, c. 191. See the note at the end.



at “each end.”\* As Cyrus commanded his troops, not to enter by one passage, but to divide themselves into two equal detachments, to enter the city by each of the sides through which the river passed, and to advance till they met in the centre, when the alarm was taken, it would be equal at the two opposite parts of the city; each would send a messenger to the palace, and as this was situated in the centre of the city, there they would “meet each other.” The tumult occasioned by the intelligence which these men brought, almost immediately upon the interpretation which Daniel gave of the vision, caused the death of the King: for when he sent to inquire the cause of the confusion, the moment the palace-doors were open, the troops of Cyrus, who had pressed hard upon the messengers, rushed in, and the monarch, with his nobles, were put to the sword.

4. The CONSEQUENCES of this great event were no less the subject of prophecy. The immediate result of the success of Cyrus was to be the deliverance of the Jews. He was to say “to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the Temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.” This was the great design of all that distinction conferred upon him by the Being “through whom kings reign,” and whose are all the empires of the earth. “For Jacob my servant’s sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me.” The express term of Israel’s captivity, and the very period at which the tyranny of Babylon over surrounding nations, should terminate, were distinctly predicted. “This whole land,” Judea and its environs, “shall be a desolation and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon *seventy* years. And it shall come to pass, when *seventy* years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the Lord, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations.”† And precisely at the close of these years, Babylon fell, fell by the hand of Cyrus; and by the benevolence of the same conqueror, Jerusalem rose from the dust.

But there were other consequences to succeed this event, consequences which respected Babylon itself, and which are detailed in the passage upon which this discussion is founded. It was to be a transfer of empire and dominion to other hands; and these decays of power and importance were to issue in utter desolation. The language employed on this point is very particular; it supposes that

\* Jer. li. 31. In this chapter may be found a variety of predictions agreeing with the circumstances foretold by Isaiah; especially their feasting followed by death, in verse 39.

† Jer. xxv. 11, 12.

the event was to be gradually accomplished; but it also decidedly asserts that the empire should never recover the blow which it should receive from Cyrus. In foretelling its ruin, the prophet sets out with a comparison which extinguishes hope respecting any remedy; and the moment the eye is turned upon Sodom and Gomorrah, as a type of this Queen of the Nations, the point is determined, and her end is come—we are prepared for all that follows. “And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees’ excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation.” In this last particular consists the resemblance between this empire and the “cities of the plain;” for in respect of the method employed, and the time occupied, to produce the end determined, these two events differed: the one was by the immediate judgments of Heaven, the other by human agency: the one was sudden, the other by slow but sure degrees. “Neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there:” it shall be a scene of solitude so terrific, that the tribes accustomed to the barrenness and horrors of the Desert shall shun it—“neither shall the shepherds make their fold there. But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there, and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures, and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there. And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces—and her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged.” What a contrast is here, to Nebuchadnezzar’s survey of magnificence which made him forget himself a man; to Belshazzar’s feast, prepared for a thousand lords; to the population and merchandise, the pursuits and the pleasures of a city far more considerable than this metropolis: in short, a more awful picture of the entire destruction of a state was never drawn.

And thus was it effected. The first step to its ruin was that it ceased to be the seat of empire; the Persian kings choosing to reside elsewhere. Cyrus also had disarmed the inhabitants, and impoverished them by exactions. When it lost its dignity as an imperial residence, it was neglected in things essential not merely to its beauty but to its preservation: and the Euphrates, once diverted from its course by Cyrus, to enter the city, never recovered its channel, but formed lakes over the face of the whole country, which stagnated in wide and pestilential marshes. The next step to their desolation was a rebellion against Darius Hystaspes, which was founded in the most desperate cruelty and ended in defeat. After slaying with their own hand, every member of their own community whom they deemed superfluous, because unable to assist in defence of the city—it was

taken by stratagem, at the end of one year and eight months. But the Persian monarch, to disable it from any such future insurrection, destroyed its gates, lowered its walls, and every way diminished its strength. The purpose of Alexander in its favour, to restore it to its ancient glory and make it again the seat of empire, was frustrated, like many of the projects of that ambitious man, by—death. From his time, the Macedonians, not only did not attempt to repair its ruins, but erected another city, Seleucia, to induce its inhabitants to abandon it. By little and little this purpose became so completely effected, that nothing was left but its walls. Four centuries after our Lord, it was made a park for enclosing wild beasts for hunting, by the later kings of Persia. The last that we hear of it from any travellers is, that it was inaccessible on account of the serpents and venomous creatures, that inhabited not only it, but overran the country round about it; and now the very spot where Babylon stood cannot be ascertained.

These are points upon which we cannot be mistaken, because a succession of historians, ancient and modern, have described its appearance in their own times. It is described by Herodotus, about one hundred and fifty years after the conquest by Cyrus; and even then the hand of desolation had strongly marked it. Diodorus Siculus, about four centuries after Herodotus, said that in his days it was extremely ruinous and nearly deserted. Strabo, about six hundred years from the first overthrow of Babylon, calls it a great desert. This is confirmed by succeeding writers to the days of St. Jerome, who speaks of it as an enclosure for wild beasts. Travellers in the fifteenth, sixteenth, and succeeding centuries to the present time, confirm the account of all that preceded them—till it became impossible to fix upon the spot with any degree of accuracy.

Thus fell Babylon; a city once eclipsing in itself the splendour of every monument of human power and greatness; and in point of natural situation possessing every advantage. It was renowned for commerce, and was a formidable naval power. "It was open to the Persian gulf by the Euphrates, which was navigable by large vessels; and which, being joined by the Tigris above Babylon, by the canal called Naharmalca, or the Royal River, supplied the city with the produce of the whole country to the north of it, as far as the Euxine and Caspian seas." Accordingly, she is described as dwelling upon many waters, trusting in ships, and abundant in treasures.

I trust it has been made sufficiently evident, that the destruction of Babylon in all its leading features was the subject of prophecy, and that those prophecies were amply accomplished, to permit us to pass on to the predictions respecting,



## II. TYRE.

Before we examine these, it will be necessary to speak of the situation and the antiquity of this city.

Tyre, like all other cities, laid claim to an antiquity more remote than the fact would justify. It was, however, a very ancient city; and of considerable strength in the days of Joshua.\* This was more than fourteen hundred years before Christ. But Josephus speaks of the building of Tyre as taking place but two hundred and forty years before the building of Solomon's temple.† Solomon's temple was begun one thousand and twelve years before our Lord's appearance, and completed in seven years. Two hundred and forty years added to one thousand and twelve, will fix the building of Tyre at twelve hundred and fifty-two years before Christ: about two centuries later than the days of Joshua. But as Tyre was not only then in being, but denominated "a strong city," it is evident that the historian refers to insular Tyre, and Joshua to continental Tyre, the last of which was older than the first. Indeed, the founding of Tyre is involved in the obscurity of antiquity, and cannot with any certainty be determined. It is denominated "the daughter of Sidon"—and Sidon was a city as far back as the days of Jacob:‡ and was probably built and named after the eldest son of Canaan, Noah's grandson.

I have already had occasion to speak of Tyre insular, and continental: to explain this circumstance, as also to elucidate certain expressions to be met with in the prophecies respecting the siege of Tyre; some of which speak of it as approached by land, and others as situated in the heart of the sea; it will be necessary to give a more particular description of this renowned city, and to observe that the predictions relate as well to Old as to New Tyre, so distinguished because the one was founded before the other; or perhaps, more properly speaking, I may say, one part of the city was built before the other: for they had the closest communication with each other, and Pliny, in describing the compass of the city, blends in his calculation the old and the new together. He describes it as nineteen thousand paces, or nineteen Roman miles, about sixteen English.§ Whereas New Tyre, or the Island, contained scarcely forty acres.|| Tyre consisted of three different cities in order of time, as they were built at different periods—dif-

\* Josh. xix. 29.

† Joseph. Antiq. Jud. lib. viii. cap. 2, sect. 1, p. 341, tom. 1. Hudson's edit.

‡ Gen. xlix. 13.

§ The Roman mile was 1000 paces; the English mile is 1200 paces.

|| Anc. Univ. Hist. vol. 2, b. i. c. vi. p. 333. Note N.

ferent also in situation, as they stood partly on the land, and partly on the sea: but one in fact, as they had the closest connexion: Tyre on the Continent, called also Palæ-Tyrus, or Old Tyre: Tyre on the Island, which, according to Strabo, was about three miles from the continent, and, according to Pliny, little more than half a mile; and Tyre on the Peninsula: for the old and new cities, were joined, it is said, by an artificial isthmus. It would not have been worthy the time which it has occupied, to state here minutely these particulars, except for the purpose of reconciling the prophecies respecting it with each other; to account for their seeming inconsistency; as well as to render intelligible some operations of that last siege by which it was utterly ruined. You will observe, that the prophecy of Ezekiel bears a direct reference to the situation of Tyre; and borrows an image from it to express the multiplication of the calamities hastening to overtake its inhabitants, which they would perfectly well understand. “Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I am against thee, O Tyrus, and will cause many nations to come up against thee, *as the sea causeth his waves to come up.*”—This is a singular beauty in the sacred writings, that they use imagery exactly suited to the event, to the occasion, and to the circumstances of the place, or the persons, whom the message concerns.

It may be easily conjectured, even from the slight description which has now been given of Tyre, that its situation was favourable to commerce: accordingly, it was always celebrated for its merchandise. The three quarters of the world wafted wealth to its ports; and people of all languages thronged its street. It became the seat of liberal arts, and the market of the whole earth. Thence Solomon fetched workmen for the most delicate and finished parts of his temple. Riches and magnificence flowed in upon it on every side; and they brought with them their usual concomitants—pride and luxury. Their presumption was founded upon their insular situation, and upon the sovereignty of the seas. It was confirmed by a long course of prosperity. Tyre claimed the ocean as her peculiar dominion. She had first taught the art of braving its tempests, and navigating its surface. Her merchants were princes; and her inhabitants were guarded by nature and by art. In fact, the title which she assumed, “Queen of the Seas,” seemed justly due to her: and nothing appeared against her, but that, which was stronger than all her defences—the hand of God—and which was foretold, two hundred years before Alexander, (by whom the Divine purpose was most completely carried into effect,) in the passage read at the commencement of this Lecture. We are now to examine the amount of those circumstances which were predict-

ed in relation to this city; and to determine how far they are justified by facts.

The predictions relate to two different sieges; the last, as we have already said, by Alexander—the first, by a conqueror of earlier date, is now to be considered; and the events of this siege were circumstantially related, at least, a century before they took place. This is an indisputable point, easily determined by the distance of time between Isaiah, Ezekiel, and those other prophets who thundered the judgments of God against this proud city, and the periods in which those monarchs flourished, who became the instruments of punishing it. As was Babylon, so also was Tyre, in the most prosperous condition, when the prophecies were delivered; so that there was no natural principle then existing from which a disastrous conclusion could be deduced. Permit me now to fix your attention upon the particulars foretold.

1. It was clearly predicted *by whom* this displeasure of God against Tyre should be executed. As in the former instance, so also in this, the conqueror is named. “For thus saith the Lord God, Behold, *I will bring upon Tyrus, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon;*” it is impossible to utter words more distinct—“*a king of kings*”—a title expressive of his greatness, and fitly applied to a man, who was justly described by one who lived under his government; “whom he would he slew, and whom he would he kept alive, and whom he would he set up, and whom he would he pulled down”—“*from the north, with horses, and with chariots, and with horsemen, and companies, and much people.*” You will observe that this is intended of the first siege, which was directed against the old city: and that this city was founded upon the continent on the brink of the sea, of course assailable by land as well as by sea: otherwise, the chariots, and the horses, and the horsemen, of the invader had been in vain.

2. The *manner* of the siege was described; and described with that force peculiar to the prophetic writings—for it is related not as an event to come, but as one which had already taken place, although so long before-hand: because what God purposes, he regards as accomplished. “Son of man, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, caused his army to serve a great service against Tyrus, every head was made bald, and every shoulder was peeled.” And this was said before a blow had been struck—before this army had been collected. You will judge of the correctness of the prophecy, and of the accuracy of the description, by the hardships which the soldiers must have undergone in a siege which lasted no less than thirteen years.

3. Its *effects* upon the inhabitants were predicted. The colonies of



Tyre were scattered far and wide. Carthage was the daughter of Tyre, as Tyre is called the daughter of Sidon; and they had countrymen diffused over Africa, the borders of the Mediterranean, and almost over the whole face of the known world. As the Tyrians had a superiority over Nebuchadnezzar by sea, it was natural that they should avail themselves of it, when they found resistance useless; and that, when the city was on the point of surrendering by land, they should make their escape by sea. Thus had Isaiah admonished—“*Pass ye over to Tarshish*”—which is understood by Bishop Newton and by the most learned and able writers on this point, to intend Tartessus in Spain. “*Arise, pass over to Chittim;*” which is a term already explained to refer to countries bordering upon the Mediterranean. Accordingly, the Tyrians did escape to Carthage—and transported whatever was valuable thither, and to other places most conveniently situated to receive them. Nebuchadnezzar, after his long efforts were crowned with success—found only a city nearly deserted, stripped altogether of its wealth, and received no recompense for his toil. So had it been foretold by Ezekiel; in the prophecy that exhibited their labours, it was added—“*Yet had he no wages, nor his army for Tyrus, for the service that he had served against it.*”\*

4. A *partial revival* of the Tyrians was predicted. Exasperated to the last degree, Nebuchadnezzar, in the fury of his disappointment, showed no pity to the few that remained; and left not the city till he had demolished it. Solitude and desertion were to brood among these ruins for a given space of time. “*And it shall come to pass in that day, that Tyre shall be forgotten seventy years, according to the days of one king*”—by which we are to understand the duration of Babylon’s power and influence among the nations. At the close of that period, by destroying this mighty empire, Cyrus broke the yoke from the necks of subjugated people. It was during this period, according to some historians, that insular Tyre, commonly called New Tyre, was built: but the best authorities to which I have been able to gain access, affirm that it was founded long before that event, and at the time mentioned by Josephus. It also does appear to me, that Old Tyre, or Tyre on the Continent, never recovered the desolation effected by Nebuchadnezzar; and that the revival predicted relates rather to the interests of the Tyrians, than to the spot which he immediately chastised. This revival is presented under the strong image of a harlot recovering her attractions, and courting distinction afresh. “*Take a harp, go about the city, thou harlot that hast been forgotten, make sweet melody, sing many songs, that thou*

\* Ezek. xxix. 18.

mayest be remembered. And it shall come to pass, *after the end of seventy years, that the Lord shall visit Tyre*, and she shall turn to her hire, and shall commit fornication with all the kingdoms of the world upon the face of the earth.”\* Thus, as the old city was destroyed, the new one rose into distinction, and again became a mart of universal merchandise. The prophet Zechariah, who lived after the events which have occupied your attention, describes the state in which he knew this city. “Tyrus did build herself a strong hold, and heaped up silver as the dust, and fine gold as the mire of the streets.”—But the sure word of prophecy had determined,

5. *Its total ruin.* The prophet added—“*Behold, the Lord will cast her out, and he will smite her power in the sea, and she shall be devoured with fire.*” Every sentence of this short verse is important, and received a literal fulfilment in the conquest of Alexander over it. This second siege lasted only seven months; but it was one of the most sanguinary conflicts, on both sides, that the collision of human passions, and of human interests, ever produced. It was directed against New Tyre; for the old city was still in ruins; and if the isthmus, said to have united the continent with the island, ever was in existence, and was ever covered with houses, it had been destroyed before this period: for one of Alexander’s chief difficulties, in this attack, was to form such a link between the city and the main land opposite to it. Accordingly, when he had, by prodigious exertion and perseverance, framed such a work, a storm arose, just as it was finished, and buried it in the abyss—neither could it have been at last effected, but for the facilities furnished his soldiers and workmen by the ruins of Old Tyre, which were scattered on the shore, and by the timber of Mount Lebanon, whose cedars shadowed its neighbourhood. Yet such a solid communication with the land was necessary, upon which the engines of war might be fixed; because Tyre was surrounded by a wall a hundred and fifty feet high, of correspondent strength, built upon the very extremity of the island, and washed on every side by the waves of the sea. After the Tyrians had exhausted every means of defence and annoyance to the invaders; after having exasperated the impetuous monarch by killing his ambassadors, contrary to the laws of nations, and the dictates of humanity; “their power on the sea was smitten”—and after repeated repulses, when even Alexander hesitated whether he should not relinquish the conflict, and abandon the enterprise, the city was taken, and Tyre was “devoured with fire.” Then the fury of the conqueror was insatiable: the carnage was dreadful beyond descrip-

\* Isai. xxiii. 16, 17.

tion; and when the soldiers were weary of destroying, when his ferocious army was glutted with slaughter, two thousand men were left; and in violation of every human feeling, Alexander fastened them upon crosses along the sea-shore.

Tyre never more raised her head from the dust, as a nation. The mortal blow was then struck, and time has effected the rest. The aspect of prophecy intimated that the remnant should at a future day hear and embrace the gospel.\* And in the time of Diocletian they shed their blood in honour of a crucified Saviour.† But, as a people, their political existence was extinguished. It had been said, *"They shall destroy the walls of Tyrus, and break down her towers: I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her like the top of a rock. It shall be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea: for I have spoken it, saith the Lord God, and it shall become a spoil to the nations."* It is now called Sûr. The appearance which it presents is that of a few fragments of scattered ruins, without so much as an entire house. "Its present inhabitants are only a few poor wretches, who harbour themselves in vaults, and subsist chiefly by fishing."‡ Such names as Shaw, and Maundrell, as men of integrity and veracity, carry with them considerable weight; and their testimony is ample and explicit in confirmation of this prophecy, in their descriptions of the present state of Tyre. The eye of the traveller wanders in vain over the whole coast in search of something which may indicate the ancient magnificence of this city: he finds only bare rocks washed by the sea, bleached by the winds and the waves, and overspread with fishermen's nets, stretched out to dry; and a few stones scattered around, as sad but perpetual monuments, that on the spot now resigned to utter desolation, human industry was once impressed. From a consideration of the fidelity of prophecy in respect to Tyre, allow me to direct your attention to,

### III. EGYPT.

In reading again the verses which I have selected, as a prediction directly leading to a definite and particular point respecting this people, we shall have to do not merely with their former, but also with their present situation; and this is therefore one of those prophecies which have the advantage of existing evidences. *"I will bring again the captivity of Egypt, and will cause them to return into the land of Pathros, into the land of their habitation, and they shall be there a base kingdom. It shall be the basest of the kingdoms, neither*

\* Isaiah xiii. 18. Zech. ix. 1—7.

† Consult Newton on the Proph. vol. i. sect. xi. p. 186—188.

‡ Anc. Univ. Hist. vol. ii. chap. 6, p. 333. Note O.



*shall it exalt itself any more among the nations: for I will diminish them, that they shall no more rule over the nations."*

1. Review the different parts of the predictions contained in these verses, and in the connexion in which they are found. The passage is short; but it very distinctly enumerates several interesting particulars, relative to Egypt. It is evident that her inhabitants were to be vanquished and dispersed; because the Lord declares, "I will bring again the captivity of Egypt, and will cause them to return into the land of Pathros, into the land of their habitation." Egypt was to be subdued by Nebuchadnezzar, and her riches were to be his recompense, for his hard service against Tyre, which passed, as we have already seen, unrewarded. "Therefore thus saith the Lord God, behold I will give the land of Egypt unto Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, and he shall take her multitude, and take her spoil, and take her prey, and it shall be the wages for his army. I have given him the land of Egypt for his labour wherewith he served against it, (i. e. Tyre,) because they wrought for me, saith the Lord."\* Accordingly, the victorious arms of Nebuchadnezzar, passed through this country; and he transported many of its inhabitants, as he did those of other nations, whom he subdued, to Babylon: others, he settled in Pontus. A specific date was fixed for this dispersion; it was to last forty years. "And I will make the land of Egypt desolate in the midst of the countries that are desolate, and her cities among the cities that are laid waste, shall be desolate *forty* years; and I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and will disperse them through the countries. Yet thus saith the Lord God, at the *end of forty years* will I gather the Egyptians from the people whither they were scattered."† I frankly confess, that I know of no history which establishes this fact: of none that determines exactly the period of this dispersion; or that can prove whether the date assumed in the prophecy was the precise time. In the absence of direct evidence, we commonly accept that which is presumptive; and when we cannot obtain proof, in the most important cases, it is usual to admit probability. Presumptive evidence is at hand; and probability is directly in favour of the prediction. For it was about forty years from this conquest by Nebuchadnezzar, that Cyrus subdued Babylon; in consequence of which event, not only the Jews, but other nations, recovered their liberties; and it is reasonable to conclude that Egypt shook the yoke from her shoulder at the same time, and that her dispersed sons then returned "into the land of their habitation."

\* Ezek. xxix. 19, 20.

† Ezek. xxix. 12, 13.

But although they were at that time to recover their liberty, they were never to reach their former greatness. “*They shall be there a base people*”—a phrase implying an alteration in their national character, as well as in their external circumstances:—a *diminished* people, and inconsiderable in the eyes of the nations—the very *refuse* of all people, monuments of degraded humanity—“It shall be the *basest* of the kingdoms, neither shall it *exalt* itself any more above the nations; for I will diminish them, that they shall no more rule over the nations.” Such is the testimony of the prophet: now observe,

2. It was very improbable, at the time when these prophecies were delivered, that Egypt should be reduced to the condition predicted. It was not unlikely that she might sometimes be compelled to submit to the fate of empires, and bow in her turn occasionally to the sceptre of a conqueror: it was not altogether improbable, that Babylon, which was, in the days of Ezekiel, in its glory, and especially that Nebuchadnezzar, who was his contemporary, should render them for a season tributary. But the probability was, that they should rise again in their strength; and that, after the example of other nations, they would recover their former distinction. This conclusion would be justified by the whole of their preceding history, by their national character, by their warlike qualities. A throne which had been once filled by a Sesostris, was not likely to sink under one stroke, never to be reared again. A nation to whom neighbouring nations applied for help: and upon whom the eyes of Israel and of Judah, in every extremity, were turned for assistance; might be disgraced by temporary defeat: but, one should have imagined, that, with the elasticity of vigour, it would spring again into its former attitude, after a season, especially when the depressing power was removed. Neither was it at all probable that Egypt should wear the appearance of desolation. Egypt, that was well watered as the garden of God. Egypt, that boasted herself independent of the clouds and the showers which supplied other nations; and that looked with pride and confidence to her river; whose resources seemed to be within herself. To Egypt, other nations resorted in the day of calamity; when the harvests of Canaan failed, this was their storehouse; and the patriarchs were frequently driven thither for succours. It was improbable that this cultivated land should ever carry traces of desolation. Still less was it probable, that its inhabitants should ever so degenerate, as to be justly denominated a *base kingdom*—nay more, “*the basest* of the kingdoms.” She had always been celebrated for wisdom, distinguished by science, renowned for literature. So early as the days of Moses, higher praise could not

be pronounced upon that eminent man, than that he was “learned in all the learning of the Egyptians.” The same superiority was held by the same nation in the days of Solomon, of whose wisdom alone it is said, that it “excelled the wisdom of the Egyptians.” Greece, of whom so many nations have borrowed intelligence; from whose stores of erudition Rome derived her knowledge; Greece herself was content to sit down at the feet of Egypt in the character of a disciple. No man would have ventured to predict the extinction of the wisdom and of the glory of such an empire, on any principles of human foresight, on any calculation of probability, on any thing less certain than divine inspiration. So far from probability, there did not appear a *possibility* of such a total change of national character, as that supposed in the prophecy, and which that degraded people *now* actually exhibit. But we remark,

3. It really became as abased as was foretold. Like all other similar events, this humiliation took place gradually—but it was not less, therefore, under divine superintendence. The means were natural: but the end was predetermined; the steady establishment of it argued superior agency; and the development of it must have been a revelation from God. Egypt submitted to three powerful conquerors, and underwent as many total revolutions. First, Nebuchadnezzar drew his sword upon it, and subjugated the empire. Then, Cambyzes stretched over it the iron rod of a tyrant, as well as imposed on it the heavy yoke of a master. After the Persian empire sunk under the oppression of Macedonian power, Alexander subdued it; from whom it passed into the hand of the most respectable of his successors. In process of time, it became tributary to Rome. Afterwards, it was subdued by the Saracens. And now, it is annexed to the Turkish empire. These changes, and the principal circumstances of them, were foretold by Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and others of the prophets: but without entering farther into a discussion of their predictions, we seize one leading point, that it was to become, and for ever to continue, a *base* kingdom, of no account among the nations, but degraded in the eyes of them all. This fact we wish to establish, by observing,

4. Such it continues to the present day. It is affecting to read the accounts, which modern travellers give, of its present prostration. The ignorance, the sloth, the cowardice, the treachery, the wickedness of the inhabitants, fill us at once with astonishment, with disgust, and with horror. The learned and accurate Pococke says, “The natives of Egypt are now a slothful people, and delight in sitting still, hearing tales, and, indeed, always seem to have been more fit for the quiet life than for any active scenes. They are



also malicious and envious to a great degree, which keeps them from uniting and setting up for themselves; and though they are very ignorant, yet they have a natural cunning and artifice as well as falsehood, and this makes them always suspicious of travellers. The love of money is so rooted in them, that nothing is to be done without bribery. They think the greatest villanies are expiated, when once they wash their hands and their feet. Their words pass for nothing"—but why should I pursue the features of this frightful portrait?—Another celebrated writer,\* in fewer words has given them a character still more severe. "The people of Egypt are all, generally speaking, swarthy—exceedingly wicked, great rogues, cowardly, lazy, hypocrites, robbers, treacherous, and so very greedy of gain that they will kill a man, for a coin of no higher value than three halfpence." A more recent and renowned traveller, Mr. Bruce, bears a correspondent testimony. Crimes are common among them, which in this assembly, I dare not so much as to name: nor ought they ever to be named among Christians. Surely, if modern history be true, they are become—"a *base* kingdom"—"the *basest* of the kingdoms."—

Yet Egypt seems to have had opportunity to have recovered something of her former position among the nations; at least, to have risen from her abject humiliation, and to have acquired some advances towards a more dignified state of civilization. In a variety of respects, it appears a desirable acquisition to polished and enlightened nations; yet it is permitted to rest in its degraded connexion with a barbarous and pusillanimous empire. The footsteps of science and of refinement have recently and repeatedly passed over it; yet they have left no impressions behind them. It is a remarkable fact, and worthy your attentive consideration, that the two greatest empires in the world have lately visited Egypt, without effecting a single change in the natural character of its inhabitants. They do not seem to have inspired the people, during their respective residence there, with a single thought above their present condition; and if they did, of which there was not the least appearance while they were with them, the sand did not more easily resign the impress of their feet to the wind that sweeps over it, than their visits were forgotten. France had twenty-five thousand men there, for, I think, eighteen months: not merely soldiers, but men of science. They effected nothing among the Egyptians. The power of France melted before the forces of our country; and Great Britain held possession of Egypt for about the same space of

\* Thavenot.

time. At the close of the campaign, our troops also left Egypt as they found it. It does not appear possible for them to recover even an attitude of decent cultivation; and the characters of prophecy are indelibly inscribed upon it—"It shall be a base kingdom; it shall be the basest of kingdoms."

I have nothing to add to these considerations; nor will I farther intrude upon you to make a variety of remarks which might be elicited from the subject. I will only observe, that skepticism brings one general objection against these representations: it is, that they confine the attention of the Deity too much to one world, when he is surrounded by an infinity which demand his paternal regard. With other worlds the Bible has nothing to do, because it is a revelation which was designed for us alone. We acknowledge that prophecy not only supposes, but proves a minute attention to the affairs of men, and a constant control over them. But it does not follow that God is less careful of every other branch of his works, or that his attention to them is less minute. God must be capable of extending his superintendence not merely to every world that he has formed; but, as it may be necessary, to every particle which is employed in its formation; and to every vapour that rises upon its atmosphere. Whoever admits the being of a God, must connect with it (however imperfectly he may comprehend it) the conception of infinity. Any limit supposed, however removed, if it even extend to the utmost stretch of imagination, is still destructive of infinity. A grain of sand removed from the solid globe, leaves it a grain of sand diminished: but the widest range of our powers subtracted from infinity—leaves it infinity still. Upon these principles, we consider the representations of the sacred Scriptures, respecting the minute attention of God to our affairs, not only rational, and correctly true, but also altogether honourable to the divine character: and while *we* rejoice in his superintendence, Revelation assures us, that "his tender mercies are" equally "over *all* his works."

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## NOTES.

### NOTES TO THE EIGHTH LECTURE.

NOTE 1.—Xenophon in enumerating the nations subdued by Cyrus, and from the conquest of which he came up against Babylon, says—Κύρος δὲ παραλαβὼν ὡσαύτως καὶ τὰ ἐν τῇ Ασίᾳ ἔθνη αὐτόνομον ὄντα, ὁρμηθεὶς σὺν ὀλίγῃ Περσῶν στρατῷ,

ἰκόνων μὲν ἡγήσατο Μηδων, ἰκόντων δὲ Ὑγκατιαν κατεστρέψατο δὲ Σύρας, Ασσυρίαις, Αραβίας, Καππαδοκίας, Φρύγας ἀμφοτέραις, Λυδίας, Κῶρας, Φοίνικας, Βαβυλωνίαις· ἤρξε δὲ καὶ Βακτριῶν, καὶ Ἰνδῶν, καὶ Κιλικίων· ὡσαύτως δὲ Σακῶν, καὶ Παφλαγόνων, καὶ Μαριανδυνῶν, καὶ ἄλλων δὲ παμπολλῶν ἐθνῶν, ὧν οὐδ' ἂν τὰ ὀνόματα ἔχοι τις εἰπεῖν. Here he names the Syrians, Assyrians, Arabians, Cappadocians, both the Phrygians, Lydians, Carians, Phenicians, and lastly the Babylonians as subdued by him. "Moreover," he adds, "he reigned over the Bactrians, Indians, Cilicians, the Sacæ, Paphlagones, and Mariandyni." No less than sixteen nations are represented in this passage as subjected to him; and this is not the whole; for the historian says "There were many other nations," too tedious to be recited, who acknowledged his control. It might well be said, by the prophet, that he should "ungird the loins of kings."

*Xen. Cyrop. vol. i. lib. i. p. 9. Hutchinson's edit. Glasg. 1767. 12mo.*

NOTE 2.—In his notes upon the prophecies of Isaiah, affixed to his translation, the learned and excellent Bishop Lowth, has given some most interesting information respecting Babylon, in his criticisms upon those chapters which relate to her glory and to her fall. On Chapter XLV. v. 1, he says—"That I may open before him the valves; and the gates shall not be shut. The gates of Babylon within the city, leading from the streets to the river, were providentially left open, when Cyrus' forces entered the city in the night through the channel of the river, in the general disorder occasioned by the great feast which was then celebrated: otherwise, says Herodotus, I. 191, the Persians would have been shut up in the bed of the river, and taken as in a net, and all destroyed. And the gates of the palace, were opened imprudently by the king's orders to inquire what was the cause of the tumult without; when the two parties under Gobrias and Gadatas rushed in, got possession of the palace, and slew the king. Xenoph. Cyrop. vii. p. 528. Edit. Hutch. 4to." *Lowth's Isaiah, p. 208, 4to.*

The same judicious critic explains the methods by which Cyrus drained the river, and points out the effects produced by it.—"By the great quantity of water let into the lake, the sluices and dams were destroyed; and being never repaired afterward, the waters spread over the whole country below, and reduced it to a morass, in which the river is lost." *Lowth's Isaiah, p. 207, 208, 4to.*

He accounts farther for the absence of all fragments of these once renowned cities; from the nature of those bricks which were made by the ancients, and cemented with bitumen: although the cement hardened by time, the bricks being made of earth or clay, mixed, or beat up with straw to make the parts cohere, and dried only in the sun—"when a wall of this sort comes to be out of repair, and is neglected, it is easy to conceive the necessary consequences; namely, that in no long course of ages it must be totally destroyed by the heavy rains, and at length washed away, and reduced to its original earth." *Lowth's Isaiah, p. 95, 4to.*

A description of the city in its original splendour, and of the various changes which it underwent from its subjugation by Cyrus, to its utter annihilation, is given by the same writer in his notes on Chapter the thirteenth.

*Lowth's Isaiah, p. 93 and 94, 4to.*

To this excellent work, I beg leave to refer the reader; as to extract his sentiments more at large would occupy too much space in the present note. The seventh book of Xenophon's Cyropædia contains also very important information on this subject, as well as the history which Herodotus gives of this singular and successful expedition.



## LECTURE IX.

## PROPHECIES RESPECTING THE MESSIAH.

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 JOHN i. 45.

We have found him of whom Moses in the Law, and the Prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

WE have now arrived at a point, whence we can obtain a prospect of Him, connected with whom, more or less, is every prophecy standing upon record; every transaction in the dispensations of religion, and in the dispensations of Providence, that preceded him; and no less every succeeding event to the consummation of all things. The history of empires gathers a new character of importance, in the estimation of the Christian, from the circumstance, that it stands related, more nearly or remotely, with the history of human redemption. The predictions respecting the desolations of some countries, and the triumph of certain selected heroes, appearing on the pages of inspiration, bear an inseparable relation to the interests of the Jewish nation; and thus their link of union with the Messiah is rendered manifest. If we could collect the various records which time has destroyed; and if to these we could add all the transactions which either perished with the actors, or have had merely a transient existence beyond their immediate day in tradition, if we could unite all these, so as to form one perfect history of mankind, from the fall of his First Parent to the appearance of his Redeemer, we should be able to take a more comprehensive view of the harmony of all the arrangements of Providence with this great period; and at the same time to trace with more precision and minuteness the bearing of particular circumstances, which now appear fragments broken off from the vast whole, only because we lack the means to discover their union. Without the possession of these advantages, which it has pleased the wisdom of God to

withhold, there remains to us sufficient of both history and prophecy to establish the harmony of Providence with Redemption; and to allow us to elucidate the subject of prophecy by the beams of the Sun of Righteousness. In availing ourselves of the means in our power, we shall find much to excite our admiration of those capacious schemes, which infinite goodness designed, infinite wisdom arranged, and infinite power executed. We shall often stand astonished at the lucid order of events with predictions; and no less at the clearness of prophecy itself, the accuracy with which the character, the person, and the offices of the Messiah are delineated, and the plenitude of evidence by which it is supported. We shall discover that every thing relating to the Mosaic economy, while it depended upon the Christian dispensation, was, from the beginning, designed to be absorbed in it. We shall sympathize with those prophets, and kings, and mighty men, who saw the day of Jesus Christ afar off, and desired in vain to approach its meridian; who anticipated blessings reserved for posterity, which they were not allowed to participate; and who believed in Him, who had not as yet been manifested in the flesh. "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." We shall be convinced, on the contrary, that nothing but the most fatal blindness, the most inveterate prejudice, the most obstinate ignorance, the most determined enmity, on the part of those who refused to acknowledge Christ, could resist testimonies so ample and so decisive. Gratitude, on our part, cannot fail to be excited for the superiority of our privileges over those of the most eminent and distinguished characters under the former covenant; and for the spiritual direction under which we are enabled to say this night, "We have *found* him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Joseph."

The testimony of the law, and of the prophets to the Messiah; and the accomplishment of that testimony in Jesus of Nazareth, are two positions to be found in the triumphant address of Philip to Nathanael. Our attention at present must be divided, between a general review of the testimony of the law; and some preliminary remarks on the more extended evidence of the Prophets.

## I. THE PREDICTIONS OF THE LAW RESPECTING THE MESSIAH.

In collecting these, we shall have opportunity to examine some detached prophecies to be found in the Mosaic writings, general,

indeed, as to their nature, but sufficiently distinct to determine their aspect, and not less impressive for being less particular than some succeeding predictions. It will also be necessary to include in this investigation *that* evidence to the coming of the Messiah, which arose out of types, no less decisive and prophetic, than the predictions themselves in relation to this grand event. Let me entreat your consideration of

1. The explicit prophecies to be gathered from the law concerning the Messiah.

That which has been usually denominated THE FIRST PROMISE, from the most serious and patient examination of the arguments used by different parties, as well as from the tenour of inspiration, I cannot but consider as a clear prediction on this subject. If I should not succeed in convincing you of the justice of the sentiment now advanced, I did not venture to produce it here, till it had been received into my own mind with entire conviction. I cannot, for a variety of reasons, (which in a course of Lectures professedly on prophecy, cannot be detailed at length,) regard the scripture narrative of the fall of man, as any thing more or less than a simple statement of facts, from which, indeed, an important doctrine is deducible. Out of the representations of Moses arose the various systems of theology prevailing over the whole earth; and the testimony of antiquity in reference to this point, as a fact, is as large as its confirmation of any scripture fact whatever, and its evidence as luminous as the nature of the subject will allow. As a fact, it is perpetually exhibited in the Scriptures; their evidence respecting it, I apprehend, must be deemed decisive, because it is either true or false; if it be true it is in vain to appeal from it; if it be false in this instance, its testimony is invalidated in every other; so far at least, as to leave us perpetually in doubt respecting its veracity on every point that cannot be established on another basis than its unsupported and single affirmation. A revelation thus shaken and uncertain is in fact no revelation; it can never answer the purpose of a guide; it can never confirm us when we waver; it will serve only to increase our perplexity, when we doubt; its doctrines and its history must always be received with cautious hesitation; and after all we are left to determine every thing by the mere light of reason and of nature. There can be no medium: the truth of revelation must stand unimpeached in all points; or we shall be in continual and painful uncertainty as to what we are to receive as true, and what we must reject as false. I have asserted that the Scriptures maintain the fall of man as a fact. So the apostle says—"The



serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety." So, again, "Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression." I appeal to you whether the reference to the fall, in these passages, is made to it as an allegory, or as to a fact? So of the Mosaic history preceding this awful transaction, the apostle regards it as a narrative of facts; when he says, "for Adam was *first* formed, then Eve;" and again, "The man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man." I will only observe once again, that the parallels drawn by the apostle Paul between the transgression of Adam and the obedience of Christ, in the fifth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans; and again, between the first and the Second Man, in the fifteenth chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians, forbid us to consider the fall as an allegory—otherwise he is placing upon an equal footing, and comparing with each other, a fact and a fable; and on these principles of what weight or importance is his reasoning? It is an absurdity too great to be credible. You must, therefore, receive the account of the fall as a fact, or reject it; and in so doing destroy totally the authority of the Scriptures; since if its testimony be untrue in one instance, it is doubtful in every other. But if the fall of man be admitted as a fact, we must consider the declaration, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; he shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel," as a prophecy relating to the Messiah, and the design of his coming into the world. There is an affecting instance afforded of Divine tenderness in the timing of this promise: the remedy is introduced to heal the wound at the very moment when guilt had inflicted it. This is, in itself, a reason for so considering the passage in question. It seems impossible, to judge by the uniform benevolence of the Divine character, that God should exclude our first parents from paradise, having in the pity of his heart provided a Redeemer, without announcing his gracious designs, when he pronounced their sentence. If this be probable, then you must remark, that there is no *other* part of his language, recorded on this interesting occasion, that could be construed into any reference to the Messiah. Nor is it likely, supposing such a promise to be given, that it should be omitted on these pages, concise as the narrative is, when other circumstances of inferior importance (for such is the passage in question, if it do *not* relate to the Messiah) are recorded. But the question should seem to be laid at rest by subsequent events. We find Abel erecting an altar, and offering on it a propitiatory sacrifice; for which no reason can be assigned, except the expectation of a future atonement for sin, by "the seed of the woman;" who was offered in this early day in a

figure. In this point of view, every thing appears natural and luminous; man's wants are met as soon as they are felt; and although his punishment was heavy, in the prospect of that curse which he had entailed upon his posterity, his anguish was alleviated, in the expectation of One who should spring from his own loins, to restore the favour and the image of God. Under the form of a serpent had they been beguiled; under the name of a Serpent was their Tempter cursed; and in commemoration of this event, I presume, has he borne in the Scriptures the title of "THE OLD SERPENT." How joyfully would they hear of his defeat; and how patiently submit to the temporary ill, which their transgression immediately superinduced, in banishing them from Eden! As they quitted their blissful bowers, doubtless—

Some natural tears they dropt, but wip'd them soon;  
The world was all before them, where to choose  
Their place of rest, and Providence their guide.

And how justly is this promise applicable to the Saviour: how completely is the prediction fulfilled! Satan bruised his heel, when permission was given him to afflict his body with torture; and still continues to bruise it, in the assaults suffered from the Prince of Darkness, by that Church, of which Jesus is, in every age, the Head. Probably, it is in allusion to this very prophecy, that Isaiah said in reference to the Saviour himself, "he was *bruised* for our iniquities"—and that the war waged by the powers of evil upon the church, is represented in the Revelation of John, as a conflict between the woman and her seed, and the Dragon, who is also called the Serpent. Jesus bruised the head of the Serpent, when he crushed his power, destroyed his empire, and released his captives. He did it by miraculous agency on earth during his pilgrimage with man; he did it more effectually by his death; he continues to do it, through the efficacy of the same offering, and the agency of the same Spirit, by the preaching of his word still. Satan fell as lightning from heaven; he fell, but he did not, nor ever can, rise again in his strength, to accomplish the malignity of his designs. The victory, which is as yet partial, shall finally be complete, on the part of the redeemed, as it already is on the part of the Redeemer.

The next prediction which presents itself under the law, relating to the Messiah, is, THE PROMISE TO ABRAHAM. Although no direct promise of the Messiah to Noah appears upon record; yet the renewal of God's covenant with man, upon the renovation of the earth, expressed to the progenitor of the new world, doubtless included this interesting point, which was, indeed, the leading and

principal object of every covenant; and accordingly a part of Noah's prophecies, relating to his sons, and to the different lot of their posterity, is universally considered to refer to their religious privileges, and to the immediate connexion of Shem with Christ. As this may be considered matter of mere speculation by some, I have passed over it, to that, which is obvious, explicit, and indisputable. Here are the first footsteps of the selection of an individual, and the separation of a direct line, as the line of the Messiah. Abraham is called from his idolatrous country, and divided from his family. He has two sons born to him. One is marked distinctly as the child of promise, and the heir of a spiritual covenant. It is foretold that he should exceedingly multiply in his posterity; but the grand prediction, and upon which your attention is to be fixed, is thus expressed; "In thy seed, shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." How is this accomplished? and in what sense could all the nations of the earth be blessed in his seed? except these words relate to Jesus of Nazareth, who, according to the flesh, descended from this illustrious patriarch? and to the gracious and benignant influences of his empire, when it shall have extended, as it will extend, over the face of the whole earth? In any other respect, how could the Jews be considered as a blessing to all nations? They have always been a people apart from all other nations—as well by their singular rites, as by their national prejudices, by their religion, and by the express command of God. They lived in the days of their prosperity within themselves, shut up from all mankind at once by inclination and by necessity; and still, in their scattered state, they cannot blend with mankind, and are occupied in pursuing a separate interest. Yet if this promise be considered as a prediction of the rising glories of the Redeemer's kingdom, it is pre-eminently true; "for salvation is of the Jews:" it is already partially accomplished; and *we* are witnesses of it. It is evident, that this expectation will account for the desire of children, universally felt, and expressed, by the daughters of Israel; every one hoped to be the mother of the Messiah; and for the circumstance, that barrenness was deemed the greatest reproach, disgrace, and curse, that could alight upon a family. If the shadow of a doubt can possibly remain upon the subject, I think even *that* must fade before the unequivocal declaration of Jesus himself, who asserted, in so many express terms, "Your Father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad." If any thing could be wanting to impress upon his mind the remembrance, or the meaning of this promise, it was superadded in that singular demand which was made for the sacrifice of Isaac; and in the recompense



at once of patriarchal faith, and of parental feeling, by the substitution of victim for victim when a ram was offered, and his son was spared. It should be recollected that it was upon this memorable occasion, and as a reward of his obedience, that this prophecy was delivered by the angel.

The two next prophecies upon which we alight in the law, are those celebrated predictions of JACOB and of BALAAM. The one—"The Sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until SHILOH come, and unto him shall the gathering of the people be." The other—"I shall see him, but not now, I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a STAR out of Jacob, and a SCEPTRE shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth." But as these have already been largely discussed in their place, in the present course of Lectures, I shall not detain you to examine them, nor repeat the arguments by which I have endeavoured to justify an application of them to the Messiah.

There is a promise which has been considered by some interpreters as relating to Christ. It respects the guide of the Israelites on their journey through the desert. "Behold, I send an angel before thee to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared: Beware of him, and obey his voice; provoke him not, for he will not pardon your transgression; for my name is in him." The arguments by which this opinion is supported would be long to detail; and after all do not appear to me so conclusive as those which sanction the two preceding passages: I shall not, therefore, avail myself of it; although perhaps it would have been improper in enumerating the testimonies of the law, not to have named it. You will form your private opinions upon this passage, while we pass on to another more important, and at the same time more evident.

THE PREDICTION OF MOSES RESPECTING ANOTHER LEGISLATOR: for this, I apprehend, is the leading feature of the prediction, although he is designated by the title of "A PROPHET." The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken." Neither to Joshua, nor to any succeeding prophet can this prediction apply; because no prophet ever did arise *like unto Moses*, as is expressly affirmed at the close of his law. (Deut. xxxiv. 10—12.) Let us then see how it will apply to Jesus Christ. He was a prophet: and by the confession of the people a great prophet. He was raised up from the midst of the Jews his brethren: he was "bone of their bone," and "flesh of their flesh:" of the seed of Abraham,

of the tribe of Judah, of the house of David. His miracles bore a strong resemblance to those of Moses; with this striking distinction; Moses acted as a servant, upon commission; Jesus as a Son, by his own power and authority. They both fasted forty days: they both controlled the winds and the seas; the faces of both shone and were transfigured, they both refused a kingly crown; they both manifested in a supereminent degree the graces of meekness, patience, and long-suffering. The parallel has been run much farther; and in my opinion has wandered far into the regions of fancy. But these are resemblances which are only subordinate; and the application of the prophecy to Christ is, in my mind, determined by other circumstances. They were both of them lawgivers. This is very material, as it forms an essential part of their character; as it constitutes the strongest parallel between them; and as it is true of no other prophet, succeeding Moses, Jesus excepted. Again, they both stood at the head of a new dispensation. "The law came by Moses; but grace and truth by Jesus Christ." Add to this, they both, in effect, united the mediatorial, and royal dignity, with the prophetic. Moses often appeared as a mediator; and "he was king in Jeshurun." It is surely unnecessary for me to run the parallel of Moses with Christ in this particular. On these three points they were alike; and when to these you add the threatening connected with this prediction—it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words, which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him"—when you consider that the Jews did actually reject him, and that the curse lies heavily upon them to this hour in consequence of this rejection—the chain of evidence appears complete; and we are prepared, for the direct application of these words to Christ, by Peter and by Stephen.\*

Perhaps I ought to mention here, that it is generally agreed, that Moses is the writer of the book of Job; and if so, then the confession of faith by that great man, ought not to be omitted, among the testimonies of the law, to Jesus of Nazareth. "Oh, that my words were now written! Oh, that they were printed in a book! That they were graven with an iron pen and lead, in the rock for ever! For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God. Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another, though my reins be consumed within me." The circumstance that the author of the book is uncertain, renders it doubtful, whe-

\* Acts iii. 22, 23; vii. 37.

ther this testimony should be arranged here; and precludes the necessity of discussing the point, whether or not these words bear a direct reference to the Redeemer. I do not, however, hesitate to say, that this is my opinion. Before I close the testimonies of the law to Christ, it will be necessary to notice,

2. The Types. Here is a field opened of immeasurable extent; and we have leisure only just to cast our eyes over it. The second son of the first man is seen kneeling before an altar consecrated to Christ; and presenting the "firstlings of his flock," as a figure of that Saviour, who is called a Lamb without blemish and without spot. That the offering of Abel did really bear this aspect to the Messiah I cannot doubt: for independently of the conviction which I feel, that the singular plan of shedding blood as an expiation of guilt, did not arise out of any natural principle, but was an institution revealed, (and no question the direction of that institution to its great object was not forgotten when it was first enjoined,) the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews decides the point, when he says, that Abel offered his sacrifice "by faith," and that, not in the difference of the gifts, but in this circumstance alone, consisted its superior excellence to the presentation of his malignant brother.

The translation of Enoch, which in that age of the world was a subject of universal notoriety, must, in proportion to the revelation made to them, have wafted the hopes of believing patriarchs forward to *his* day, who should "abolish death, and bring life and immortality to light by his gospel." Such a signal instance of victory over this great adversary, when he had but just commenced his ravages, must have been particularly encouraging; and could not but have produced the effect which I have ventured to ascribe to it, supposing them to have had some explicit revelations respecting the Messiah. The sacred history preceding the flood is so very concise, that we cannot determine from it, with any degree of accuracy, the nature or extent of such revelations to the antediluvian patriarchs: but that they were more numerous and more luminous than is usually imagined, I think, may be collected from the testimony of Jude, that Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied both of the dereliction of professors in the last days, and of the coming of Jesus to judgment. Now, his translation would be a wonderful confirmation of his doctrine; and with revelations so clear as this last circumstance must lead us to imagine, would render Enoch, in this particular, in the estimation of his venerable contemporaries, a type of Christ.

Without any great exuberance of imagination, the ark which saved the family of Noah, might be considered as referring to a greater salvation.



The ladder, which Jacob saw in his vision, whose foot rested on the earth, and whose top reached to heaven, while angels ascended and descended upon it, appears not to have been without a mystical meaning: at least, so our Lord's own words appear to imply, when he promises Nathanael, and his fellow disciples—"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

The very slavery and deliverance of Israel's descendants in Egypt—their journey—and their promised inheritance—have been considered, by the inspired writers themselves, as bearing spiritual allusions.

But from the very commencement of the Mosaic dispensation, the testimony of the types to their great Antitype becomes more lucid and more diversified. On the eve of their departure from Egypt the passover was instituted; and every circumstance respecting it was so full of meaning as to render it worthy of perpetual commemoration, till it was absorbed in that original of which it was a striking copy, and "Christ our Passover was slain for us." The choice of the victim, "a lamb without blemish"—its separation, in reference to him "who verily was foreordained"—the way in which it was to be prepared—the forms with which it was to be eaten—the purpose which it was to answer—the sprinkling of its blood upon the houses of the Israelites—the effect which it produced, in the passing by of the destroying angel wherever the blood was seen—the institution of it as a lasting ordinance to the very end of that economy—all these things together, could not fail to make us acquainted with its design, even had it not been amply unfolded in the explanations of the New Testament writers.

Among the types which shadowed forth the person and offices of the Messiah, and especially the design of his sufferings, we must not omit to mention the brazen serpent. Besides the impressive correspondence of circumstances, which might justify us in considering the one emblematical of the other, our Lord has himself placed the subject beyond controversy, by a direct selection and appropriation of this transaction, from those which marked the journey of Israel through the wilderness. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

So, of the long succession of types instituted by Moses—and explained by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews: it would be a useless occupation of your time, to refer to the scape-goat, to the great day of atonement—to the priesthood—to the duties of the

High Priest in the holiest place of the Sanctuary—to the various washings and feasts—all which are too obvious to require explanation, and too numerous to allow me to pass through them: besides which, were they otherwise in themselves, I could add nothing to the strength, to the fulness, to the perspicuity, of the reasoning employed in that Epistle to which I have referred you, and which is always in your hands.

Thus the law testified of Christ by a variety of explicit prophecies, and no less by types, which predicted, with equal force and harmony, his coming and his great purpose. It is necessary to name, and I shall only name,

## II. The more extended evidence of the prophets.

The discussion of this interesting subject must stand over till the next Lecture. And I believe it will be necessary to trespass farther upon your patience than the printed list announces.\* I find it will be impossible to finish the subject in the next Lecture; especially as I consider this, merely preliminary to those greater and more decisive testimonies which are behind. We shall have occasion to speak of our Lord's names, his offices, and his herald; of his birth, his life, and his death; of his exaltation, and his reign; all of which are the subjects distinctly of many and impressive prophecies. In filling up this outline I prefer even extending the course to occupying too much of your time, and exercising too far your patience in a single Lecture; especially as I cannot relieve the tedium necessarily excited by long discussion, by the vivacity of imagination, or by historical details, in justice to my subject—which is too solemn for speculation, while I am confident it is *in itself*, too interesting for indifference.

Already, on the mere surface of the subject, we may begin to trace the correspondence between Jesus of Nazareth and the predictions of the Law respecting the Messiah; a correspondence so complete, that the chief priests and the rulers of the Jews did not attempt to refute him, when publicly in their synagogues he taught the people out of it “the things concerning himself.” Upon this correspondence was founded the conviction of the disciples; when they said, “We have found him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write.”—They express no doubt, no hesitation, no anxiety on the subject. Their language is the language of confidence, expressed with the simplicity of truth. And they were adequate to form an accurate as well as a decisive judgment upon

\* The printed list had proposed to comprehend the Course in twelve Lectures, of which only two were appropriated to the prophecies relating to the Messiah.

this point. They had means of comparison which we cannot possess. Not only had they the prophecies which remain to us, but they saw the Redeemer's face, they heard the grace and truth poured upon his lips, they knew his manner of life, they listened to his preaching, they beheld his miracles, they were companions of his tribulation, they were present at the closing scenes of his sufferings, they were not separated from him till he left the world. At an advanced period of his pilgrimage here, after his resurrection from the dead, and just before his ascension to glory, he appealed to them, and said, "Ye are witnesses of these things."—Their conviction is also mingled with joy—the address of the text, is an exclamation of inexpressible delight. The very words of Philip were used by a great philosopher when he was conscious that he had immortalized his name by the discovery of a new law in hydrostatics. The occasion was more worthy the transport of the Disciple: for to find "Him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write," is to be in possession of every thing which we need in this world, and every thing which we can enjoy in another. While you participate the blessing revealed by the prophets, and discovered by the apostles, it is but just, in sharing their triumph, that you should feel their gratitude.



## LECTURE X.

## PROPHECIES RESPECTING THE MESSIAH CONTINUED.

## LUKE XXIV. 44.

And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me.

It is manifest from a close investigation of the history and the predictions of the Old Testament, that the saints under that dispensation enjoyed large and comprehensive views of the Messiah about to come. The circumstance that they had less of light than ourselves acted as a powerful stimulation upon these pious minds to enlarged exertion and to more accurate research. They did not sit down satisfied, as we but too frequently do, with sweeping over the surface of a text: but in proportion as the parts of revelation were fewer, they studied them with greater diligence, with an interest more lively, and with an application more intense. An exuberance of privileges, an overflow of communication, a perfection of light and of knowledge, have, by the perversion of our nature, in too many fatal instances, rendered the world at large, and even professors, careless, lukewarm, indifferent towards Him who was the Desire of all nations, and was long and anxiously expected as the glory of Israel. Human imperfection commonly diminishes the value of intercourse with any exalted personage, by the privilege of intimacy and frequency. This unfavourable operation affects some minds especially, while it is felt in a measure by all. Contempt is proverbially said to arise out of familiarity: if this is to be received with certain limitations, the foundation of the axiom is laid in truth; and it is a miserable and mortifying consideration that its bearings lie in every direction. It would hardly be conceived, if it were not established by matter of fact, that even the Scriptures are become undervalued by the extent of their cir-

culatation, and by that freedom of access which it is the distinguished privilege of the age to have to this spiritual treasury. While our pious ancestors, from whom they were sealed, and to whom they were prohibited, would have relinquished with delight a large part of their small property, for a book, and even for a leaf of this Sacred Record, the entire volume lies in every room of a professor's princely mansion, unread, unprized, and covered with dust and neglect. This universal diffusion of light, is still a blessing, although perverted, and abused: and the condemnation rests upon the head of those with whom the negligence originates and abides; who are insensible of the good which they despise; and who "love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil."

The method which we shall pursue, in endeavouring to strike out the characters of our divine Master from the testimony of prophecy, will be simply to follow the leadings of the Bible itself on this great subject. The manifestations of the Messiah were not sudden and overwhelming; but gradual and increasing. His rising upon the world, resembled the rising of the natural sun: preceded by the dawn, the twilight, and the preparatory glories of the East, at length he himself appeared, clothed in radiant and serene majesty. It is our wish with humility to follow that path which he himself has marked out; and to attempt the gradual development of his character by unfolding the progressive features of prophetic revelation.

Our last effort was to collect from the writings of Moses, passages which related evidently to some distinguished and extraordinary personage; which upon an examination of their leading characters, presented a striking resemblance to Jesus of Nazareth; and which, so considered, instructed us to regard him as the Messiah. The application of them to the Saviour, which we ventured to make, was corroborated by the practice and opinions of the writers of the New Testament; a confirmation, which, in the estimation of those who admit their inspired authority, will be deemed decisive; while others will probably consider their testimony as ranking no higher than an evidence of the prevailing opinions of the day, respecting the exalted personage then universally expected, and the popular sense of the passages in question. Even in this last point of view, they are of importance; and so much of interest must of necessity be granted them by the party with whom they weigh least. After the same enumeration, for the same reasons, and on the same authority, we considered the ceremonies of the former dispensation, and its sacrifices, as so many types of the Messiah; and the whole Mosaic economy as a "shadow of good things then to come," but

which have been since possessed, and are now pressing on to perfection. So far as we have already advanced, I consider myself as only having made statements preparatory to the immediate discussion of the prophecies respecting the Messiah. This evening also will be occupied in the consideration of those general predictions which are scattered over the prophets, and which relate to his general character. From this time, and after the present Lecture, it will be necessary to produce the evidence of the infallible truth of this "sure word of prophecy," by attending to that particular delineation of the Messiah, in his person, his life, and his sufferings, with all their consequences, which were so minutely and exactly accomplished.

There is one particular position which I shall endeavour at this time to establish—That the prophets constantly instructed the respective generations of the Jewish nation in which they successively lived, to expect an extraordinary personage whom they denominated the Messiah, and whom they sometimes described in general terms, and sometimes exhibited with a minuteness of representation which has astonished succeeding ages, who have had the advantage of comparing the prophetic records with the history of that person to whom, from the very circumstance of the exact agreement between them, they unquestionably relate.

To examine some general prophecies, previous to a future exhibition of more striking and particular predictions, and necessary as preparatory steps to more minute investigation, is my present object; and all that remains of your time will be occupied in considering a few of those passages which bear a reference generally to THE NAMES, AND THE OFFICES, OF THE MESSIAH.

The illustrious personage to whom these singular writings directed the attention of the world, is described,

### I. BY CERTAIN NAMES AND TITLES.

These may be arranged under three distinct classes—Metaphorical names—titles of dignity—and names of humiliation.

1. Those which are METAPHORICAL. The language of prophecy abounds in images of the most impressive and sublime character. The style of the east is replete with expressions figurative even to exuberance; and is scarcely tolerated by the less elevated, but perhaps more correct, genius of Europe. The Scriptures have all those descriptive characters which so eminently distinguished the quarter whence they are derived to us, and where they were so long deposited. But, contrary to the general style of eastern



composition, there is nothing tumid in their descriptions, nothing cumbrous in their ornaments, nothing forced and unnatural in their expressions. Their magnificence is equalled only by their chastity; and arises not out of that pomp of circumstance so laboriously wrought by other writers their neighbours, but from the unaffected grandeur of their thoughts, and the native sublimity of their subjects. The eloquence of the Bible is energetic, lively, and affecting: its style mingles simplicity with majesty; and its figures heighten the effect, without diminishing the force, of every subject on which they are employed. Poetry requires, and usually possesses, more of imagery and of embellishment than any other species of composition whatever. The poetry of the east, no less than that of other nations, distinguishes itself from the prose, by the strength and variety of its imagery. The prophecies are committed to the sacred pages in poetry; and this circumstance will account for the prevalence of figurative expressions in the books of the prophets over every other part of the inspired writings not poetical. If it entered into the business of this Lecture, many beautiful specimens might be produced, from an abundance that would require little selection. It might also be easily proved that the poetical parts of the Bible, as far excel eastern compositions, by the force and accuracy of their imagery, as it is superior to all other writings in the simplicity of its general style.

These comparisons and criticisms, however, belong to another department: and the remarks obtruded thus far upon your attention were designed merely to account for the circumstance that, on so interesting an occasion, so much should be conveyed to mankind by imagery, in a case where, perhaps, some might expect only plain and direct reference. Besides, this method aided that gradual development of the divine plans which God had purposed from the first; and the reference which was in earlier ages remote and figurative, as the time of the advent of Christ approached, became more direct, and the language more simple. It was common to represent thrones and dominions by stars and celestial bodies; and it is a fact, that in foretelling the reign of the Messiah, no part of nature was left unsearched for imagery expressive of his characters; while all figures employed were full of grandeur and meaning, and sufficiently striking and appropriate.

LIGHT, and especially the light of the SUN, naturally presented itself to the prophetic eye, when the seer designed to express the Redeemer's glory; or to describe the beneficial effects produced by his knowledge among mankind. Darkness but too well symbolized the situation of man considered collectively or individually, and

the state of the world. Sin had depraved human nature, ignorance had obscured the human mind, and the curse outraged society. Its order was deranged, its harmony destroyed, its peace annihilated, its bonds dissolved, its beauty defaced. In the mean time the prophet saw an indistinct light resting upon the mountains of the east like the breaking of the morning, and conducted to their summit by the Spirit, at a height which no mortal foot could climb, anticipated the future day, and even saw the rising sun. To speak without a figure; wrapt in the visions of the Almighty in the midst of prevailing ignorance and depravity, he foresaw the coming of the Messiah, and foretold the gracious influence of his dominion. Light was the figure that conveyed his impressions to his countrymen. "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great *light*; they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the *light* shined." The connexion of this passage marks its decided reference to the Messiah: and because the event was certain, he speaks of it as already having taken place: no uncommon practice with the prophets. Another says, "Unto you that fear my name shall the *Sun of Righteousness arise*, with healing in his wings." In reference to these figurative predictions, Jesus calls himself "the bright and *morning star*;" and the father of John the Baptist, speaks of the Saviour as "the *day-spring* from on high, which, through the tender mercy of God hath visited us;" while Simeon pronounced him "a *light* to lighten the Gentiles, and the *glory* of his people Israel."

Sometimes a tree planted by rivers of waters, flourishing in the pride of its situation met the eye of the prophet, and reminded him of the flourishing estate of the house of David, during his personal reign, and that of Solomon immediately succeeding. It had been revealed that Jesus should descend from that House, and he seized the image to transmit to future ages, and to convey to that in which he lived, his views of the Messiah. He said, "Behold my servant who is called **THE BRANCH**." You will recollect that under this figure Joseph was blessed by his fond and dying parent: it was, therefore, considered in that day as an image of fecundity and prosperity, and became an appropriate image of the success and universality of the future empire of the personage expected and represented under this metaphorical language.

Then vegetable life was exhausted of its beauties to describe the object of their admiration. A plant was supposed, possessing medicinal qualities, and a healing virtue: this was considered an appropriate symbol of Him, who was to heal human calamities—and he was called "**A PLANT OF RENOWN**." So he denominates him-

self a "VINE"—and John calls him "the TREE OF LIFE, whose leaves are for the *healing* of the nations." Proclaim its virtues, and pronounce its praise, ye who have tasted its fruit, and feel within yourselves the witness that ye shall never die!

In reference to the shelter which he was to afford the repenting sinner from the wrath of God, and the refreshment derived from him amid the trials of life by his people, he is called A COVERT, and "the SHADOW OF A GREAT ROCK in a weary land"—"A Man shall be a *hiding-place* from the wind, and a *covert* from the tempest."

When the standard of a monarch is erected, his people flock to his banner, and thus give a public testimonial that they espouse his cause, and that they are willing to die in his service. In allusion to this circumstance, the Messiah is called "AN ENSIGN of the people." Those who admit the claims of Deity flock to his standard. Or, the prophet, perhaps, designed to represent him as a Beacon standing a signal to those who wander, that they may find their way home to God.

Because there is not salvation in any other, he is called "a FOUNDATION." "Behold, I lay in Zion for a *Foundation*, a STONE, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure Foundation." Ah! had the Jews but believed their prophets! then the house of Israel had been builded up, and not, as at this time, laid in ruins! But this is "*the Stone*, that was set at naught of the builders."

A cluster of metaphors may be found in one passage by the prophet Hosea. "I will be as the Dew unto Israel; he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon. His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive-tree, and his smell as Lebanon. They that dwell under his shadow shall return, they shall revive as the corn and grow as the vine." These images seem unquestionably to refer to the Messiah; or rather to the revival of Israel under his benign influence. Such are the metaphorical titles given to the Messiah in the prophecies—all of them unequal to the grandeur of the subject: but they are such as nature or art will furnish; and we must be satisfied, on such a theme, to advance as far as human language will allow, where imagination fails in conceiving its magnitude, and faints in attempting to grasp its infinity. There are many more which might be produced; but while these appear to be the leading ones, it would be injury to that which remains of the subject to enlarge farther here. We next produce,

2. His titles of DIGNITY. We select *four*, as a specimen of others.

Daniel speaks of him under the name of "THE ANCIENT OF



DAYS"—and describes, in the most forcible and impressive manner, the majesty of his appearance, his resistless authority, and his age commensurate with eternity. "I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and *the Ancient of Days* did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him." It is only necessary to remark here, that had Jesus been a mere man or only a great prophet, this description of the Messiah could not have been applicable to him: moreover, if he had no existence prior to his coming into this world,—none previous to his appearance among men as the reputed son of Joseph—he could lay no claim to the title of "the Ancient of Days:" so that either the prophet mistook the nature of the Messiah, or Jesus assumed too much in claiming the Messiahship, or he was more than some who call themselves Christians are willing to allow.

Isaiah denominates him "THE MIGHTY GOD." The simple name of God in the original is derived from a root implying power and strength; and the force of this title is doubled by the epithet *mighty* superadded. It appears to convey clearly the ideas of omnipotence and all-sufficiency. In the same connexion, the same person is called "THE EVERLASTING FATHER," or the Father of eternity.

JEHOVAH is the appellation selected by Jeremiah: "This is the name by which he shall be called, *Jehovah* our Righteousness." The derivation of this word from a root which signifies independent, self-derived, inextinguishable existence, consecrates it to the immortal, unchangeable God.

EMANUEL, was the name which expressed the residence of this exalted Being with man; and shadowed forth with peculiar felicity the future Messiah: "being interpreted" it is "God with us."

It is a most extraordinary circumstance, and on all natural principles unaccountable, that after these lofty titles, these men who lived so long before the event, should, in reference to the very same person, apply,

3. Names of HUMILIATION. Unless they had been divinely inspired to develope the plans of God, this could never have taken place: because, had they been feigning a character, it would never have entered into their imaginations to have described him, at one and the same time, the most lofty and the most abject of all beings! Yet in the prophecies, among many titles of even ignominy, he is

called a CHILD, and a SERVANT—the one an image of weakness, the other of degradation.

For one moment rest upon this part of the subject, and conceive Daniel's "Ancient of days"—called a servant. What fancy could bring together images so removed? or what impostor would ever think of blending such qualities as the most invincible power and the most helpless debility in one person! Yet "my SERVANT" resounds through the prophets in reference to him who is even called "Jehovah's Fellow"—and in the very same passage, Isaiah brings this power and this weakness together! Unto us a CHILD is born, unto us a Son is given"—what follows? "and the *government* shall be upon *his* shoulder; and his name shall be called, Wonderful, Counsellor, *The mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.*" What apparent incongruity! It is not, it could not be, the device of man; for it was beyond man's powers to reconcile contradiction so manifest! But God reconciled it, when "the Word was made flesh"—when a child grew up to command the elements—to raise the dead—to restore decayed organs—to suspend, or surpass, or control, or counteract the laws of nature. In short, it was the character of the Messiah, although it was such a character as human ingenuity could never have thought of framing!

The person that bears in the prophecies this variety of names is described,

## II. BY HIS OFFICES.

As the Messiah, Jesus was designated to sustain some most important offices: and the description of these constituted much of the character of the Saviour when he was the subject of prophecy. In the enumeration of his names, we carefully selected such only as bore no immediate reference to this branch of the subject; but most of those offices, to which he was appointed, may be ascertained from the very titles by which he is distinguished. He is called an ANGEL, and the MESSENGER OF THE COVENANT; clearly implying that he was to announce peace, reconciliation, and amity between God and man; and himself to submit to be the servant in fulfilling this office. "The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple: even the Messenger of the Covenant whom ye delight in: behold he shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts." He is called JESUS, a name which signifies *Saviour*, and sufficiently expresses the nature of his mission. The titles MESSIAH and CHRIST, both mean *the Anointed One*, and clearly imply his appointment to certain offices, and his separation for illustrious purposes: in allusion to the

most ancient method of setting apart individuals to any high or sacred employment, by pouring oil upon the head. This custom it not yet wholly laid aside. In the solemn and public recognition of a monarch's induction to his great and arduous duties, he is still anointed with oil. Under the Old Testament dispensation, it was common to anoint prophets as well as kings, as a token of the divine choice. Thus, Elijah was commanded: "Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah, shalt thou *anoint* to be prophet in thy room." In the same way the high priest, and the inferior priests were consecrated to the services of the sanctuary. Moses received explicit directions on this subject respecting Aaron and his sons: "Thou shalt *anoint* them, and consecrate them, and sanctify them, that they may minister unto me in the priests' office." From these recollections it is apparent that when the person whose birth is foretold is called the Anointed One, two things may be inferred: first, that it necessarily supposes he was set apart to fill certain high offices; and secondly, that the expression may include royal, prophetic, or priestly dignity—or, as is the fact in this instance, all of them unitedly. That the prophets considered the person whose coming they predicted thus consecrated, is evident from the tenour of their writings; and one single passage, selected on account of its peculiar perspicuity, shall serve as an example of all. In the name of him who was to come, Isaiah says—"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath *anointed* me to preach good tidings unto the meek, he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all that mourn: to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness."—This comprehensive passage furnishes a full detail of those numerous and gracious offices which the Messiah was to fill, although they are expressed in general terms.

Before this part of the Lecture is dismissed, it will be necessary to specify a few of those leading stations to which the Messiah was appointed, as distinguished from these general declarations. In a variety of instances prophecy was more explicit, and we cannot, therefore, be satisfied without a more distinct enumeration of his offices. Had all the predictions been expressed thus indefinitely, the knowledge which those who had only seen the promises afar off, would have been necessarily much more contracted than it really was, and the evidences of the Messiah less conclusive in favour of Jesus.



1. He was to be a King. "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against his *Anointed*, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. Yet have I set my KING upon my holy hill of Zion." The Hebrew word implies, "I have *anointed* my KING." Again: "Thy THRONE, O God, is for ever and ever; the SCEPTRE of thy KINGDOM, is a right sceptre. Thou lovest righteousness and hatest wickedness: therefore, God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." Again: "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." The connexion of these passages contains language which never could apply to David; and which furnish the outline of no less an empire than that which is ascribed to the Messiah, and which, as we shall hereafter see, was to be universal and eternal.

2. He was to be a priest. We have already looked over the Mosaic economy, not so much to gratify our curiosity in relation to the ceremonies and the institutions of antiquity, as to trace the resemblance which they bear to that illustrious person to whom they all looked forward. These add much to the elucidation of the Saviour's offices. The propriety both of the sacrifices commanded, and of the priesthood instituted, arises out of their determinate direction to a future and a superior object; and severed from this connexion they have no apparent meaning, and no decided end.—But thus contemplated, they exhibit the Messiah, first as a sacrifice, and afterwards as a Mediator. These were two things essential to the priest's office. He was first to atone for sin, by shedding of blood, and then, thus having entered into the sanctuary, to solicit pardon and a blessing on the people. While the types were thus figurative of the Messiah's offices, the language of prophecy, was still more explicit, and the terms employed the most express that could be selected. "The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent: Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." Here is a striking peculiarity. Other priests could not continue by reason of death. Aaron had many successors, till that order of things ceased. Every one in his turn laid aside his robes, bowed his anointed head as low as the dust of death, and yielded his sacred office to another. But not merely the priesthood, in the hands of the Messiah, was to be eternal: he himself is described as having neither beginning of days nor end of life—"a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec."

—The reference to this singular character, and the ground on which he was a type of the Messiah's priesthood, appears to be twofold. First, he was priest not in the usual way of consecration and appointment, by derivation, from others, but by immediate constitution of God. As it does not appear that he was a link in a chain of priesthood running through his family, but that he stood singly in his office by the institution of God himself: so we do not read that he had either a predecessor or a successor: and I think the contrary may be inferred—that the order centred in him. In this point of view he is a singular type of Him, who, in the nature of things, could have no predecessor, and can have no successor; because his priesthood, like himself, is eternal and unchangeable. Secondly, Melchisedec united the royal and priestly dignity; and, therefore, was a more complete type of Christ, than any persons, who held these high offices singly and separately.

3. He was to be a prophet—a Teacher. Under this title he was foretold by Moses. And the expectation that he should instruct the world was as universal as the anticipation of his arrival. The woman of Samaria said, "I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ; when he is come, he will tell us all things." Jesus commenced this office, so soon as his public ministry began, and maintained it, till he left the world. Hence arose the conviction of Nicodemus—at once from his mighty works and from his wonderful words. "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher sent from God." Well he answered his character! The errors of man, guided only by nature and by reason, were disclosed and corrected, by this divine Instructor. The obligations of the righteous law were explained and extended. The system of divine truth was revealed as perfectly as the present state of things will allow; and the will of God explained to the human mind, so far as a finite capacity can contain and comprehend it. All that was discovered by his ministry, was also exemplified in his life, and became ratified by his death. Unbelief yielded to conviction; hope succeeded fear; joy chased despair; and suspense was removed by persuasion. A new world presented itself before the man, and Jesus commanded him to arise and take possession. If instruction was to constitute one part of the character, and was to be one of the leading offices of the Messiah, on the testimony of prophecy, then is the evidence on the side of Jesus of Nazareth conclusive; and we venture to ask the Jews, who admit the inspiration of their prophets, yet deny the claims of the Saviour, and profess to look for a Messiah still to come, "When Messiah cometh shall he do greater things than this man?" Can he furnish more exalted precepts? will he afford

clearer and more perfect instruction? The fact is, Jesus has accomplished all that prophecy predicted of him, so far as his offices are concerned.

Here, for the present, we rest. We have now passed over all that is said in general, respecting the Messiah; and all that can be considered necessary as preliminary to the more particular investigation of those predictions which minutely relate to his life and character. These *remain* for discussion; and I have only to repeat this evening, that I consider the last and the present Lecture, as only introductory and preparatory, to the evidence of prophecy, in respect to the Redeemer, upon which we shall immediately enter, when we are permitted again to assemble together.



## LECTURE XI.

## PROPHECIES RESPECTING THE MESSIAH CONTINUED.

## 1 PET. I. 10—12.

Of which salvation the prophets have inquired, and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified before hand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things which are now reported unto you, by them that have preached the gospel unto you, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.

IN the divine character exists every possible attribute of excellence in its full extent, and in its utmost perfection. One man is wise and another is strong; one is learned and another is amiable; one is distinguished by his rank, and another by his piety: it is no uncommon thing to find a separate good quality in the human mind; sometimes a constellation of graces shine in one character; and even to this occasionally power, wealth, and influence have been superadded; but who that wears the fashion of a man concentrates in himself every excellence, and presents to the world ‘virtue without alloy?’ We must soar from this planet in search of such a Being, who exhibits the plenitude of perfection, and is all in all; or, while we are bound to this terraqueous sphere, be content to trace his properties in his operations, to spell out his attributes in the dispensations of his providence, and to read his character more clearly in his most holy Word. It is our privilege to have access to the outline of Deity, thus revealed, at all times; it is our duty to avail ourselves of this privilege, with frequency and constancy; and the discharge of this duty will bring with it its own recompense. The object of our contemplation presents itself in points of view as various as they are striking; and every survey discloses it with increased advantage. Every time we approach

his glories, they blaze with augmented splendour, every time we renew our converse with him, through the medium of this volume, our conviction of his perfection becomes strengthened, enlarged, and established. We take an attribute separately, and follow it through the mazes of providence; conducted by the infallible guidance of revealed truth, we pursue the dark and solemn path without losing our way; we arrive at the point where it centres; we are overwhelmed with astonishment at the labyrinth which we have trodden, and at the scenes which we have witnessed in our course. Whoever shall consult the oracles of God, will never be at a loss to find exemplifications of the separate properties of justice and mercy; of purity and power; of wisdom and fidelity; and of all those perfections which make up the character of the Divinity. But to see them blended—this is the mystery of godliness—this, the grand scheme which heaven contemplates with wonder—this is the plan the parts of which were gradually unveiled to the prophets, and afterwards more fully reported to us in the gospel—“which things the angels desire to look into.” Attributes which contemplated singly seemed at variance, when they met melted into each other; like the colours of the rainbow, which preserve their distinction without destroying their unity. It is unnecessary to lead you through a long chain of historical events, and to examine it link by link, in order to illustrate the operation of any separate attribute, and thus gradually to learn the character of the whole, when one event presents itself, comprising all the perfections of God, and discovers them subsisting in complete and undisturbed harmony. In the provision for fallen man, what mercy! In the price which human redemption cost, what justice! In the person, and the character of our Substitute, what purity! In the circumstances attending the life and the death of our Lord, what miraculous displays of power! In the scheme of salvation, what wisdom! In its execution, what fidelity! In the whole, what unity! what beauty! what perfection!

We shall be able to pursue this delightful subject, in continuing this night our examination of the prophecies relative to the Messiah.

We have advanced so far as to lose sight of general predictions, and to arrive at those which are more explicit. The subject itself commands interest, even should it not be so happily treated as expectation requires. When Virgil embraced the universal opinion that, just at the time of our Lord's advent, some distinguished personage was about to appear, after describing the blessings of his reign in terms so corresponding with the Scriptures, that one is in-

duced to conclude they were copied from the Hebrew prophets, he says, "O that the remnant of a long life may yet be spared, and so much fire remain, as shall enable me to celebrate thy deeds!"— Shall Christians feel less anxiety to speak the praises of their Master, whose character infinitely excelled the imagination of the Roman poet? or professors exhibit less ardour than a heathen expressed, to declare the honour of his Majesty? The warrior, and the statesman, have always had a long train of admirers: nobility has never wanted a pen to record its glory, or a pen to pay homage to its rank: history has consigned them to fame, and her sister poetry has lent her aid to write them on the pages of immortality. The sons of Science, of Distinction, and of Valour, outlive their little day; and their names dwell on the tongue, ages after their ashes have mouldered in the sepulchre! Is no remembrance due to Him who "liveth for ever and ever?" Shall it be proclaimed before an earthly monarch, "Bow the knee?" Shall flattery cry before human vanity, "It is the voice of a God and not the voice of a man?" and shall no one step forward to give God the glory? The incense of praise offered to a fellow-creature is usually adulation. His titles frequently ascribe to him attributes which he does not possess. Tyranny sometimes is flattered with the appellation—*Most Gracious*—a man who violates every tie of nature, and breaks through the wholesome restraints of society, may be found decorated with the splendid distinction of the *Right Honourable*—and a grovelling, weak, debased mind, may, by the courtesy of the world, be called the *Most Noble*. What is this pageantry applied to the worthless, but splendid ignominy? We have paid homage to the dignity of Jesus Christ, and have found all his titles descriptive of his character; the most elevated of them the mere shadows of his native worth and excellence; and the whole infinitely short of his majesty. We have contemplated his high and glorious offices, and have seen human greatness, nay, the principalities of heaven, absorbed in his unrivalled superiority. As yet we have examined only general testimonies to the Messiah; it remains that we indulge ourselves at this time in contemplating those particulars which were revealed by the word of prophecy respecting His Birth, and His Life.

### I. HIS BIRTH.

Some predictions relate to the events which were to usher the Prince of Peace into the world, or immediately to precede his appearance, and to prepare the way before him: others particularize



the circumstances of his birth, with a minuteness which cannot sufficiently be admired. The best way of discovering the agreement of the prediction with the fact, will be to examine what the prophets teach us to expect relative to the Messiah, and by a comparison of their representations with events, to see how far they correspond, and to what extent they may be deemed accomplished.

1. Great convulsions were to prepare the way before the Messiah, whose presence was to be the pledge of peace. "For thus saith the Lord of hosts, Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land: and I will shake all nations, and the Desire of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts."\* The metaphors of this prophecy are very sublime. We have seen the sea, wrought into tempest, rolling its billows fearfully upon the shore. We have seen the heavens covered with darkness, and have heard the voice of the thunder-storm bursting from cloud to cloud. We have heard of the ravages committed by the shock of a single earthquake, what time a whole city fell beneath the stroke of divine power, and ruin overspread the face of the country thus visited. How dreadful is any of these evils! Its single operation is sufficient to defy human prudence, to fill the heart with terror, and to dissolve the cords of life. But the imagery of this prophecy blends them all, as messengers before the face of nature's Lord. "For thus saith the Lord—I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; and I will shake all nations"—as we have already explained, in noticing the style of prophecy, these figures may imply the agitation of the princes of this world, and the shocks which the empires should receive in their power by land and by sea. Alexander began to shake the kingdoms three centuries before the appearance of the Messiah. History says, that he visited Jerusalem, and that the high priest showed him the predictions of Daniel as well relating to the future events to arise out of his vast empire, as to those transactions which were at that time going on, in which also he was the principal instrument of accomplishing the divine purpose. His mind appears to have been affected by this discovery; and that the impression was both deep and permanent, may be gathered from his treatment of the Jews, so foreign to his purpose. He marched to Jerusalem, designing to destroy it: when he came there, after the chief-priest had this interview with him, he not only spared them, but showered upon them with a liberal hand privileges and immunities. It is not improbable that the recollection of what he had read and heard from

\* Haggai ii. 6, 7.

the book of Daniel on that memorable occasion, might influence his mind on his death-bed: for in his last moments he not only refused to name a successor to his vast empire, or to distribute it himself among his generals, but plainly alluded to the wars and divisions which should immediately succeed his decease. Be this as it may—it is a fact, known to the whole world, that long and sanguinary contentions were kindled by this event; which ceased not to agitate and distract the world, till the mighty empire of Alexander was swallowed up by the prevailing majesty of Rome. It is equally beyond dispute, that the successive powers which mankind should obey, from the reign of Nebuchadnezzar to the coming of Christ, were all distinctly enumerated, together with their greater or less degree of stability, under different images, in the visions of the prophet Daniel. The amount of these predictions, as well as the history of those times, but amplify, while they abundantly confirm, the passage to which I am now directing your attention; and the nations were shaken, till the appearance of the Messiah, when the temple of Janus was shut, and universal tranquillity succeeded this tempest of contention.

Another remarkable circumstance in this passage is the name by which the Messiah is distinguished—"The Desire of all Nations." I will not now dwell upon the particulars revealed concerning him; which must, so far as they were understood, have kindled ardent hope and eager expectation. It is useless to reason upon hypothesis, when we are in possession of facts. Not merely the most enlightened of the Jews, were convinced, as his advent approached, that the time of his manifestation was at hand; but an extraordinary impression rested upon the whole Gentile world, that "Nature was about to bring forth a King." The poets imagined what would be the splendour and the blessings of his dominion; and the expectation crept into the sober pages of history. The attention of the wise men was awakened in the East. Impostors, availing themselves of the state of the public mind, deluded the people by usurping his name and his authority. And thus the Messiah was not merely the expectation of his *own*, but "the Desire of *all* nations."

Another circumstance noted was, that he should at last appear without previous notice. This is distinctly marked by Malachi,—*"The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple."*—What was the fact? He came so suddenly, that those who were looking for him were taken by surprise, and knew him not. "He came to his own, and his own received him not." The time of his appearance was most accurately determined: for not to enter upon the calculations of Daniel, which will more suitably claim our no-

tice at his death, it is expressly decided by the passage already recited, that he was to appear before the destruction of the temple, which in the days of Haggai had its foundation laid. "The Desire of all nations shall come, and I will fill *this* house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts."

2. A Forerunner was predicted, and his character and ministry clearly delineated, in a variety of prophecies.

This precursor was to be a prophet. A comparison was instituted between John the Baptist; and his predecessors upon whom the prophetic spirit rested; and Jesus gives the preference to John, when he says, "What went ye out to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and *more* than a prophet." In perfect consistence with this representation of our Lord, Malachi, who wrote four hundred years before the birth of this singular personage, speaks of him under the name of the most distinguished of all the Old Testament prophets. "Behold, I will send before you *Elijah the prophet*, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord."\* His father perfectly understood that the forerunner of the Messiah was to be thus gifted. "Thou, child, shalt be called the *prophet* of the Highest." This was not the fond dream of parental partiality: but the decided voice of prophecy for ages had been, that pre-eminent dignity should be attached to the man immediately and officially connected with the Messiah. The spirit of prophecy had ceased four centuries when he appeared. Its revival was anticipated; in the light that dawned upon the mind of his father, at his birth. And the full possession of it was an honour conferred upon the forerunner of Christ, worthy the occasion itself, and the transcendent dignity of his office. It would lead us too far, and in comparison of the more important business of this Lecture, it would be trifling with your time and patience, to run the parallel between the character of John and that of his type, Elijah. It is impossible to consider the life, and the ministry, of the one, and of the other, without perceiving, that they were actuated by the same lively zeal for God and his cause; armed with the same unbending courage, and that they cherished similar habits of self-denial and austerity. It was manifest, that not Elijah himself, but some distinguished character who possessed "the spirit and power of Elias;" that not the person, but the office of the precursor of Jesus, was predicted; that every important particular was actually accomplished in John, which will be still more apparent as we pass on; "and if ye will receive it, *this* is Elias which was to come."

He was to be a pioneer and a herald—first to clear the road, and

\* Mal. iv. 5.



then to announce the approach, of the Prince of Peace. So Isaiah spake, according to common calculation, seven hundred and twelve years before the prediction received its accomplishment in this great character; and the prophet united these offices. "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a high-way for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain. And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."\* With the last part of this beautiful passage we have nothing at present to do. Our immediate object is to trace the meaning, and the exact fulfilment of the first. The allusion is to the ancient practice of bodies of men preceding the monarch on his journey to clear the road—and others again to proclaim his titles. The first is, I believe, still practised in China, and the annunciation of his style is not yet laid aside in the East. In our own country the king has his pioneers for particular occasions. The herald is also familiar to us, although the custom of crying before the monarch prevails not among us.

Permit me for a few moments to dwell upon this most impressive and sublime prediction. Every member of every sentence conveys, either expressed or implied, some important sentiment to the heart.—"The voice of him that crieth"—The man is lost in his message. He is introduced without a name—it was unnecessary—he would be sufficiently marked and distinguished by his employment. The prophet is concealed, with matchless effect, behind the design of this appearance. No description is afforded of his talents or his attainments: because, great although he was to be, he could reflect no glory upon his office, but was himself to be irradiated and ennobled by it. The prophet directs us this evening how to moderate and to prosecute our inquiries. We come not up to gaze upon "a man clothed in soft raiment," such as is worn "in kings' palaces:" or to see him rudely clad in a vest of "camels' hair, with a leathern girdle about his loins"—these are mere circumstances, worthy our transient regard only as they are significant in an inferior measure—we go not forth, in fact, to look upon John, but, in him, to trace the features, and to learn the character, of the forerunner of the Lord.

*He cried*—audibly and earnestly. His was not the cold, dull, unimpassioned and sleepy harangue, of a man who is indifferent to the cause which he professes to defend. He was impressed with a sense of the weight and importance of his message: set apart to his

\* Is. xl. 3—5.

office, he was furnished with powers equal to the full, the honourable, the useful discharge of it; and was anxiously concerned to exert himself to the utmost in order to fulfil the trust committed to him. Such was to be the herald of the Messiah; such ought to be the ministers of Jesus Christ. You will determine, whether John was the faithful, laborious, diligent messenger, which this passage supposes.

He literally cried "in the wilderness"—for that was the scene of his public preaching. His proclamation was to consist of so many distinct parts. He was to proclaim the dignity of the person whom he preceded; and whom the prophet calls, in the character of the precursor, "the Lord"—and "our God." Thus actually did John, when he testified, "He that cometh after me, is preferred before me, whose shoes' latchet I am not worthy to unloose."—He was to announce his coming—and the removal of obstacles; nay, he was himself to prepare the way for the Messiah; and he accomplished his mission when he preached so earnestly, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand"—when he cried before him, "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world!" and thus he was to pass on, to the splendour, the extent, the stability, and the certainty of the Saviour's spiritual empire. But as this extends beyond our present purpose, we relinquish it to show,

3. That the circumstances of the birth of the Messiah were all minutely foretold. As it was expressly ordained that he should descend from the house of David, the evangelists have distinctly marked that important circumstance in their genealogies.\* And as exactly for this purpose, the strict care which the Jews took of their genealogies was necessary, so exactly to this point, and no farther, did it extend. When Jesus appeared, and had received this evidence of his Messiahship, the value of such records ceased, and with it their existence: for since the great dispersion of this nation by the Romans they are lost, and his tribe is altogether unknown to every Jew now in existence.—This is, however, a very general feature in prophecy: those which remain are more distinct and particular.

He was to be born of a Virgin. "Hear ye now, O house of David—the Lord himself shall give you a sign—Behold, a Virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call his name Immanuel." Without entering into a discussion of this mysterious subject, (the veracity of which is not at all affected by the circumstance that it exceeds our comprehension,) it is manifest, that the voice of prophecy, required the Messiah to make his entrance into the world,

\* See the note.

in a manner as miraculous as the evangelists say he actually did. It is also evident, that whatever other interpretation may be given of the bearings of this passage in its connexion, the language which I have read you must have referred to the Messiah ultimately and explicitly, not merely from the application of it to him in the Gospel of Saint Matthew, but because in respect of no other person was it, or could it be, ever literally fulfilled. Thus are two particulars of his birth plainly indicated; and a third circumstance is no less clearly predicted:

He was to be born at Bethlehem. "Thou, Bethlehem-Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel: whose goings forth have been of old, from everlasting." Joseph, his reputed father, and Mary his espoused wife, were resident at Nazareth; when a decree of the Roman emperor for a general enrolment, called them from their obscurity to Bethlehem, the city of David, according to the purpose of the monarch, that every man should be entered after his tribe and his family; and then, and there, was Jesus born, according to the previously formed arrangements of prophecy.

Predictions were no less multiplied and no less explicit, respecting,

## II. HIS LIFE.

We learn the mildness and the perfection of his character. "Behold, my servant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delighteth: I have put my spirit upon him, he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break: and the smoking flax shall he not quench." In the meekness and gentleness of Jesus Christ; in his sufferance of wrong, and his patient perseverance in well-doing; in his unassuming disposition; and in his tenderness towards every human want and every human infirmity, as well of mind as of body; we find the counter-part of this most affecting representation.

His benevolent employment, and his faithful discharge of his office, is exhibited under the image of a shepherd. "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd, he shall gather the lambs with his arm and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young." And with what compassion he regarded the people! with what kindness he instructed them! When he came nigh to the city that refused him, he beheld, and wept over it!—

His coming was to be a distinguished blessing to the world. "O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high moun-



tain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength: lift it up, be not afraid: say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!"—In correspondence with this prophetic testimony, the angels announced to the shepherds, "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

The effects of his kingdom upon the natural and moral world at its first establishment; and the nature of those miracles which should accompany his preaching, were all the subjects of distinct and luminous prediction. "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out and streams in the desert." There cannot be a more affecting sight than that of a man groping at noon-day in darkness, and with dangers compassed round, and solitude!" He has eyes, indeed, but

"Eyes that roll in vain  
To find the piercing ray, and find no dawn :  
So thick a drop serene hath quench'd their orbs,  
Or dim suffusion veil'd."

"Thus with the year  
Seasons return, but not to him, returns  
Day, or the sweet approach of ev'n, or morn;  
Or sight of vernal bloom, or summer's rose,  
Or flocks, or herds, or human face divine;  
But cloud instead, and ever-during dark  
Surrounds him; from the cheerful ways of men  
Cut off, and for the book of knowledge fair  
Presented with a universal blank  
Of nature's works, to him expung'd and raz'd,  
And wisdom at one entrance quite shut out."

This class of human misery arrested the attention of the Saviour; and he furnished repeatedly evidences of his Messiahship, by opening the eyes of the blind. In like manner he restored the withered arm, the palsied limb, or the impotent frame. With a sublimity not inferior to the fiat by which he commanded universal nature to rise, he said to the deaf, "Be opened"—and the man heard; and at the same time the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake; and they that beheld were beyond measure astonished, saying, "He hath done all things well: he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak."—

The very manner of his riding in triumph into Jerusalem was the subject of a distinct and impressive prophecy. "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold, thy king cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass." I need not remind you that our Lord literally thus rode into Jerusalem, while

his disciples spread their garments in the way; and the multitude scattered branches before him; and children cried, Hosanna; and the scribes and Pharisees looked on with astonishment and with indignation. But it is worthy your notice, that both in the prophecy and in the event, while a triumph was announced on the part of the Messiah, it was so conducted, and was accompanied with such circumstances, that it diminished nothing from the humility and meekness of his character, nor clashed with other predictions relating to his mild and unassuming manners. If he appeared as the King of Zion, he was still "lowly."

Now, the most extraordinary circumstance relating to his life is, that after all this fulness of evidence, together with the general expectation of the Messiah awakened and kept alive, he should be unknown and rejected. One should have concluded, that the people to whom the lively oracles of God were committed, would, at once, have traced the resemblance between Jesus of Nazareth and the Messiah of their prophets.

It was perfectly reasonable to expect that his mighty works would have spoken for him; that the exact and perpetual fulfilment of predictions so well known and constantly read in their synagogues, could not have failed to arrest their attention and to seal their conviction, and that every heart in the Jewish nation would have been open and prepared for his reception. But "how then should the scriptures have been fulfilled?" This very singular and affecting circumstance of his life, is that which, of all others, is most amply dilated, most frequently pressed, most distinctly urged in the prophetic writings. He was to be this obscure, insulted, suffering character, from the beginning to the close of his days. He was neither to be admired nor acknowledged at his birth, or in the early part of his life. "For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness: and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him." The prophets anticipated the little conviction that should rise out of their testimony. "Who hath believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?"—Affliction was to drive her ploughshare over his countenance; and sorrow to be the sad companion of his journey through this vale of tears. "Many were astonished at him! his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men." "He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not—we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted." Still more than this, he speaks of

that obstinate rejection of him which characterizes the Jews to this day. "Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make gross the heart of this people, and make their ears heavy, and close up their eyes: lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and be converted, and be healed." Such was the general character of the Jewish nation in reference to all their judgments and to all their mercies; to all their privileges and to all their instructions: but the accomplishment of this language is most complete in their treatment of Jesus Christ. So that the rejection of the Saviour by his own nation, was as essential to prove the Messiahship, as any other evidence whatever deducible from prophecy; and the present blindness and state of Israel stands a permanent memorial to this very age in which we live, both of the truth of prophecy and of the just pretensions of Jesus: for such the Messiah was to be, and thus was he to be treated.

Your time is too far advanced to allow us to pursue farther this subject, or to enter upon another. We cannot at present pass beyond the particular predictions relating to the life of Christ: the next Lecture will, if God permit, comprise his sufferings and exaltation; and conclude the prophecies respecting the Messiah.

In the mean time allow me to ask, what attractions the Saviour possesses for you? The Jews rejected, but do you receive him? The prophets call him the Desire of all nations; and in himself he is an object infinitely desirable. What are the traits of character, which you have been accustomed to admire and love? Are they those which alone stamp dignity upon human nature, and best distinguish man from the brute creation? Are they those emanations of Deity which sin extinguished at the fall, and which the transactions of Calvary restored in all their former excellence—in all their pristine beauty—in all their primeval splendour—in all their ancient grandeur and majesty? Do you indeed venerate purity of character, benevolence of life, holiness of conversation, tenderness of heart? Ah, see them most conspicuous, most pre-eminent, most permanent, in the object this night presented to your contemplation. Is your heart formed for friendship? Are you cast in the mould of social affections? Do you love the domestic circle? Do you prize above the world's wealth a faithful bosom upon which you may repose your head; a faithful ear into which you may pour your feelings; a faithful heart, which will throb with your anxieties, and exult in your joys? Behold here, "a friend that loveth at all times—a brother born for adversity—a friend that sticketh closer than a brother;" and "in all our afflictions he was afflicted."



“He in the days of feeble flesh,  
 Poured out his cries and tears;  
 And in his measure feels afresh  
 What every member bears!”

Are you a sinner overwhelmed with the sad conviction of guilt and of misery? Is it all fear without and conflict within? Does your conscience testify against you, and your heart condemn you? Does the sentence of impartial justice against all transgression roll in thunder over your head? Look up, trembling spirit! The voice of Jesus can hush this tempest. The smiles of his face will disperse these threatening clouds. Tranquillity shall break through them, and shine once more upon thy troubled heart. Hope, and faith, and joy, shall supplant fear, and unbelief, and anguish, when he says, “Go in peace; thy sins are forgiven thee!”

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## NOTES.

### NOTES TO THE ELEVENTH LECTURE.

Respecting the genealogy of our Lord, the writers of the Ancient Univ. Hist. have the following remarks.

“The Jews had a law which expressly forbade heiresses to marry out of their own tribes. It is true the Virgin Mary seems to have been far enough from being one of that sort, at least in possession, whatever she might be in reversion, or by virtue of their jubilee laws, according to which all lands and inheritances were to revolve to the original owner, or to his next heir or heiress. But there was still a much greater tie, which kept the virgins of the tribe of Judah, but especially those of the house of David, from marrying into another tribe or family, namely, the sure expectation they had, that the Messiah was to be of that lineage, and to be born in Bethlehem, the city and patrimony of that monarch; and how careful every family was to preserve their genealogy, needs not to be repeated.

“It is, therefore, in vain that the Jews exclaim against the uncertainty of Christ’s being of the seed of David, because Joseph’s and not Mary’s genealogy is deduced from him by the two evangelists, who is yet affirmed by them to have had no share in his conception. The certainty of the virgin’s descent from that house is rendered evident enough by what we observe above, especially if we add the testimony of the evangelists themselves, who call her miraculous child, the son or descendant of David. If it be asked why they chose rather to give us that of her husband? it may be answered, that they conformed in it to the custom of the Hebrews, and even of the sacred writers, who deduce their genealogies from the male rather than the female line; for if Christ the son of Mary was the son or descendant of David, it must follow that his mother must be so too.

“But the greater difficulty is, to reconcile the variations of the two genealogies of St. Matthew and St. Luke, and we much question whether the greater part of our readers would care to have all repeated that has been said on that subject, though in ever so succinct and epitome, especially considering that the point has not been so sufficiently cleared hitherto as to leave no room for fresh cavils and objections, &c.

“First, then, we beg leave to observe, that the titles of father and son, as well as the terms to beget and be begotten, in the language of Scripture, do not always imply an immediate, but frequently a remote, succession. Hence the phrase often used by Moses, *when thou shalt hereafter beget children, and children’s children*, and the

name of father and son given to a predecessor or successor at the distance of two, three, or more generations, as will more fully appear by the sequel. This being premised, will serve as the basis to the following remarks on the subject of these two gospel genealogies,

"1. St. Matthew gives one genealogy, and St. Luke another, and both in some names vary from the Old Testament.

"2. St. Matthew who begins his from Abraham, divides it into 42 successions, called by him generations; that is,

"14 before }  
 "14 under } the regal government.  
 "14 after }

"3. The first 14 are the same with those of the Old Test. and in St. Luke.

"4. The next 14 in St. Matt. contain the legal succession of the line of Solomon, until its extinction in Jechoniah, al. Coniah and Jehoiachim, when the line of Nathan, the son of David and brother of Solomon, took place.

"5. The inheritance in the Jewish polity being unalienable farther than the Jubilee, as was before hinted, and then revolving to the next surviving heir, the latter, though at some distance from the former, was called the son, that is, properly, the successor of the former. Thus, Salathiel, who by St. Luke's genealogy appears to have been the descendant of Nathan the son of David, is by St. Matt. said to be begotten by Jechoniah, the last of the Solomonic line, because he was the next surviving heir of the house of David after Jechoniah's death. Had not therefore Solomon's line been set down, and the end thereof noted, it could not have appeared from St. Luke, how Salathiel came by his title of succession; for the line of Nathan could not have any claim to it, whilst that of Solomon subsisted, unless in an uncertain reversion; and this will account for the difference between St. Luke and St. Matt. in these middle 14 generations.

"6. But there is likewise in this latter succession a manifest variation as to the number from the books of the Old Test. It has indeed been solved, by saying that the evangelist, aiming only at the three round numbers of 14 generations above mentioned, had overlooked or purposely passed by some of the redundant ones; and this answer hath hitherto passed for correct.

"But the difference seems to arise from something more material than the bare aim at an equality of numbers. The historical books set down all the kings in general that had reigned from David to Jechoniah; but St. Matt., as a genealogist, seems to take notice only of those who had a legal title, and to omit others; of this latter sort we take Ahaziah the son of Jehoram by Athaliah to have been, who is said to have been made king by the inhabitants of Jerusalem upon his father's death, because his eldest brother had been killed by the Philistines, which seems to intimate that they had chosen him in lieu of some infant son of his deceased brother. For had not this been the case, he would have succeeded, of course, without the people's choice. In the same class we may put Joash, who succeeded his father Ahaziah, and Amaziah the son of Joash, all who might succeed each other in prejudice to the elder branch, till this being extinct, made way for the younger in Usiah or Osias, the son of Amaziah, who is therefore called by the evangelist the son that is, as we have hinted above, the successor of Jehoram, though at the distance of three generations above-mentioned.

"Thus again Zedekiah, who was set up by the king of Babylon in prejudice of his elder brother Jechoniah, is likewise omitted by the Evangelist. Now when these irregular successions are taken away, there will remain but the same 14, which are mentioned in his genealogy.

"7. The next variation between the two evangelists is in the last 14 generations, and rises from the one's constant care of pointing out the passing of the inheritance as far as it goes in the elder branch. They both agree as far as Zerubbabel, after which St. Matt. goes on with Abiud and his heirs down to Eleazer, where the line of Abiud ends; and then he sets down as his son and successor Matthan, who is by St. Luke mentioned as under the name of Matthat, and was of the line of Rhesa, the son of Zerubbabel. So that he entered into the regular succession, after the extinction of that of Abiud.

"Thus again Matthat or Matthan dying childless, Eli was obliged, according to the Mosaic law, to take his wife and raise up seed to him, and by him begot Joseph the husband of Mary, who, according to the same law, was still reputed the son of the dead

elder brother. For this reason St. Matt. rightly calls him the son of Jacob; whereas St. Luke, who did not proceed on the same method, calls him the son of Eli. The first gives the name of his legal, the other of his natural father.

"St. Matt. might in all probability have fetched his genealogy from the records of Bethlehem, the patrimony of David, and wherein therefore none were entered, but such as by a regular lineal descent were in actual possession of it; and where the younger branch, though in actual possession of the crown, could not be regularly enrolled, as long as there was any heir of the elder left alive, or till such time as this latter failed. St. Luke, on the other hand, who, as he tells us in the preface to his Gospel, proposes to supply such defects as he found in those who had written the history of Jesus Christ before him, fearing lest these omissions should cause some confusion, for want of pointing out when the younger succeeded the elder branch, has recourse to the book of Chronicles, where the series of the successions both regular and irregular, legal and illegal, are exhibited. So that both had their genealogies from the most authentic, though different records, and scrupulously adhered each to his own, according to the scheme they had in view, and, consequently, instead of clashing, do more probably clear and confirm each other.

"There is still one difficulty left with respect to St. Luke's genealogy, viz. his introducing of Cainan in the line of Shem, adding thereto one generation, contrary to the Hebrew text in Genesis and the Chronicles, and all the versions of it, except the Septuagint; contrary to the concurring testimony of Josephus, Philo, and other Jewish doctors, as well as to that of the ancient fathers; all who not only omit Cainan's name, but reckon only ten generations from Noah to Abraham, whereas with this there would be eleven.

"This difference has given more pains to commentators to reconcile, than we think it deserved, considering the likelihood there is of its having been jumbled into St. Luke's text, by the carelessness of the transcribers, there being another Cainan mentioned in the verse immediately following, which might be also according to the old close way of writing, in the very next line. But allowing it to have been originally in St. Luke, it is plain, he must have had it out of the Septuagint, which version both he and the other sacred writers his contemporaries used, and the copy which he then had might have been corrupted after the same careless manner; for it doth not appear, that all the copies of that version had this name, else it would be found in all Latin versions of it, as well as in Josephus, Philo, and the fathers; and then they must have reckoned eleven instead of ten generations.

"The same may be said even on the supposition, that it was originally put in by the seventy interpreters; for as neither they, nor the transcribers of the Hebrew copy, which they took with them into Egypt, were infallible (at least we think we have made it appear that they were not, when we spoke of their version) how easily might that word have crept into the text by their inadvertency.

"But if all this will not satisfy the scrupulous, what we have observed above all the distinctions of natural and legal parents, will easily remove the difficulty; so that Arphaxad might be the natural father of Sala, and the legal of Cainan, or *vice versa*. There is therefore no need of having recourse, as some have done, to injurious suppositions against the Jews, as if they had purposely scratched out the name of Cainan in the Hebrew copies, that they might take occasion to cry down the Septuagint version; much less to other more violent means, to account for so small a variation, which, for aught appears to the contrary, was occasioned by the mere oversight of a transcriber, and, the more probably of St. Luke's own copy, than of either the original or Greek version."

*Anc. Univ. Hist. vol. x. B. i. Chap. 11, p. 331—335. Note Q. Dublin Edit. 1745.*

After so long an extract, to reconcile the account which the evangelists have given of the genealogy of our Lord, I can do no more than refer the reader, respecting the descent of Jesus, from the house of David by his *mother's* side, to the facts stated by Dr. Allix in his reflections on the books of the New Testament, chapter the seventh, and to the admirable train of reasoning which he establishes on those facts. This work has been, I believe, recently republished in a separate form: the way in which I have access to it, is in Bishop Watson's Theological Tracts; and the part to which I refer is, vol. i. p. 452. Some judicious criticism on these genealogies may also be found in the Notes of Dr. Doddridge's Family Expositor *in locum*, Vol. I. It is rather wearisome to wade through so much as has been written upon a subject so little interesting in itself: but the tedium is corrected by the recollection of its importance, as to the consequences deducible from it.



## LECTURE XII.

PROPHECIES RESPECTING THE MESSIAH CONCLUDED.

LUKE. XVI. 31.

If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

WE usually form our judgment of actions, from their splendour rather than from their utility. We are apt to be dazzled by magnificence of appearance, without inquiring after the intrinsic value of the object admired; and we are guided by adventitious and imposing circumstances, in forming our decisions upon any subject, more frequently than by its native dignity and importance. In judging of human characters, we are necessarily compelled to reason upon that which is external: to gather motives from actions, to rise from effects to causes, and from conduct to argue principles. Unable to read the heart, or to penetrate the veil that covers the latent but powerful springs of human operation, we know others only as they seem, not as they are. But we carry this principle too frequently beyond necessity. When we might have opportunity of deciding upon something more satisfactory than mere appearance, we neither seek nor embrace the occasion: we rather court that which accommodates itself to the senses, to the passions, even to our infirmities, than that which is addressed to the reason, to the understanding and to the conscience. The eye, in a flower-garden, overlooks the violet, and is arrested by the tulip; because the one courts us with all the luxuriance of lovely and dazzling colours, and the other is modestly satisfied with diffusing fragrance around it, without pressing to be seen. Worth seldom asks a witness of its excellence, and often therefore loses its just applause. Those actions which attract universal notice and succeed in obtaining general admiration, not merely have frequently little intrinsic value, but are little more than splendid vices. In the estimation of God, he, whom the world almost worship as a

saviour, is found a destroyer. We regard persons and things through the medium of prejudice arising from our situation in respect of them: could we shift our station, or the medium through which we behold them, we should generally find the excellencies or defects ascribed to them, by the partialities of our sentiments of regard or of aversion, magnified beyond all just proportion, and all real existence. Thus, the man whom one nation regards as an object all-glorious, is to another inexpressibly vile: both speak and judge according to their interest, and their particular relation to him: both are partly right and partly wrong: he has good and bad qualities—but in a serious point of view, by parties altogether unconcerned, if such can be, a conqueror must of necessity be a curse: because he depresses one class of his brethren of mankind as much as he elevates unduly another. The orb which rises upon one quarter of the globe as a Sun, blasts the other as a meteor: the beams which afford to one favoured spot vitality and nutrition, shed upon the rest blight and mortality. Yet these are the objects that excite attention, and command superior respect!—On the contrary, a life of usefulness terminating in a death of ignominy—a Saviour, wearing the form of a servant—tabernacled almost unknown among us—was noticed only to be persecuted, and closed the scene of his sufferings amidst the brutal shouts of unfeeling multitudes, whose peace was purchased by his agonies!

On matters of mere opinion, the sentiments of different persons will be as various as their characters. Subjects which appear to one mind self-evident, present themselves to another clouded with doubt, and surrounded by insuperable difficulties. Reasoning, which one man considers conclusive and irresistible, another regards as defective, inconsistent, and unsatisfactory. But there are certain points on which all men agree: there are truths which are universally admitted; and should any one attempt to deny them, he would be deemed, by common consent, a madman. No one doubts the existence of light: no one denies the shining of the sun: no one questions objects presented to the senses. Yet the medium of the senses is imperfect. Their evidence is sometimes false. They may be imposed upon, and frequently are so. They may become disordered, and transmit an image to the mind, far from a correct resemblance to the object of which it is, professedly, a type. It is also a medium which may be destroyed; an evidence which may be removed. Truths built upon a firmer basis than the testimony of the senses, are rejected. And such is human inconsistency, that when religious truth avails itself of the evidence of the senses—evidence on every other occasion admitted as demonstration—the testimony itself is questioned, and the fair deductions from it, are rejected. Revelation appeals to

the senses for the good produced by its influences; appeals to superstition destroyed, and to institutions of mercy erected; to altars stained with human blood overthrown, and to principles of humanity, of peace, of benevolence, of piety, established—appeals to the eye and to the ear, to the understanding and to the heart, to the reason and to the conscience—and frequently appeals in vain!—The apostles appealed to that “which was from the beginning, which they had heard, which they had seen with their eyes, which they had looked upon, which their hands had handled of the word of life”—and their testimony was not received, their evidence is still rejected. Prophecy gives her powerful aid: but we are “still slow of heart to believe.” What more can be required? “If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they believe though one rose from the dead.” This evidence was actually afterwards super-added—and the hardness of heart, in those to whom it was given, still remained.

This night we conclude the prophecies respecting the Messiah; and our present object is, to compare the facts with the predictions which relate to his sufferings, and his exaltation.

We have already seen, that, although he was the expectation of successive ages from the very beginning of time: although grand events of providence levelled the mountains and filled up the valleys before him: although his herald whose office, nay his very language, was foretold, preceded him—the eyes of men were holden that they should not know him. And this was necessary, in the first instance, to fulfil the language of prophecy itself, which had affirmed that so it should be: and, principally, to carry into effect the great purposes of God relative to human redemption. Thus, while his murderers obeyed no impulse but that of their depraved passions, consulted no interest, sought no end but the gratification of their own malignity, acted under the domination of no principle but the tide of their prejudices, and were impelled to rise up against the Saviour by no other force than their own free choice, they were still, without design and without constraint, doing “whatsoever the hand and the counsel of God determined before to be done.” We may also, from the clew afforded us of the character of the Jewish nation, trace the progress of their conduct towards our Lord, from its commencement in the bitterness of defeated expectations, to its dreadful consummation in the murder of him, whom they allowed, and were compelled to allow, to the very last moment, a just and innocent person. Filled with prepossessions in favour of external greatness, they forgot that the King Messiah was to be “meek and lowly,” obscure and afflicted, and thus, in the rage of the disappointment, contributed to make



him the neglected, injured, oppressed character, for which they despised him, and in so doing placed the evidences of his claims upon an unshaken basis, and armed all the representations of their own prophets against themselves. They looked for a hero clothed in the thunder of power to extirpate their conquering adversaries: what, then, was their indignation when Jesus appeared, without any of these warlike qualities? and, still more than this, utterly disclaiming them? It was seen at once, that he was formed to bless with peace the turbulent nations, and not to rekindle among them the slumbering fires of war. They heard him decry such a domination as they affected, and affirm that his empire was in the heart. They soon perceived, by his preaching, that it was his glorious triumph to subdue the rebel affections, and not to drag the wretched captive at the wheels of his chariot. His proud countrymen, who had ill-brooked their servitude, turned, with disdain from a Saviour, who declined to break from their shoulders a yoke of temporal submission to the Romans; and whose sole object it was to release the slave of sin from his worse than adamantine fetters. In vain the tempest was hushed before him into peace, and the winds, and the waves, yielded him obedience. In vain diseases, and death itself, acknowledged his undisputed authority, and the very body consigned four days to the sepulchre, upon which the dishonours of mortality were already known to have taken place, became reanimated. They would not have him to reign over them. They hated him the more for his works. They followed him with cruel malice through his ministry; and finally closed their persecutions by staining their hands with the blood of innocence. This is the scene this night to be unveiled; we are to trace the sufferings of Christ through their last agonies, and to listen to the voice of prophecy respecting the time, the place, the manner, the miracles, and the design of his death.

1. The time of the appearance and of the sufferings of the Messiah had been so clearly predicted, that calculations were made with a degree of nicety and certainty unrivalled, which were fully established by the event itself, and which even the Jews did not deny, till it became necessary, as a justification of their unreasonable prejudices against Christ, and as a plea for the obstinacy, which in defiance of all evidence continues to reject him. I may go farther—the term, fixed for the appearance of the Messiah, by the prophet Daniel, is still allowed to have been exactly that period in which Jesus lived and died; and they excuse themselves from admitting the force of this fact, when it is urged against them, by saying, that the calculation is indeed accurate, but that the coming of the Messiah is delayed on account of their sins. This is the remarkable testimony

of prophecy to an event in itself still more extraordinary. "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem, unto Messiah the Prince, shall be seven weeks; and threescore and two weeks the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come, shall destroy the city, and the sanctuary, and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week; and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined, shall be poured upon the desolate." This explicit prediction contains many distinct features of which it is practicable at this moment to mark only the most prominent. The design of the Messiah's appearance is stated with a clearness worthy the writings of even a New Testament apostle, and cannot sufficiently excite our admiration—"to make an end of sins—to make reconciliation for iniquity—and to bring in everlasting righteousness." This grand object will hereafter form a separate branch of the discussion of this Lecture. Then the strong expression—"Messiah shall be cut off"—supposes that he was to fall by violence—and will be seen to agree with facts when the manner of his death is considered. But the time ordained was "threescore and two weeks"—and the date by which the computation is to be made—"from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem." Prophetic weeks are understood in this, as in all similar cases, to intend weeks of years—that is to say, every day is placed for a year; and the calculation proceeds upon the number of days to be found in threescore and two weeks, the sum of which will give us the number of years from the period assigned to the accomplishment of the prediction. Having obtained, by these means, four hundred and ninety years, we examine how far the fact will be found to correspond with the prophecy. From the decree granted by Artaxerxes in the seventh year of his reign to Ezra, for the restoration of the ruined fortunes of his country, to the death of Christ, are exactly four hundred and ninety years. The learned and accurate Dr. Prideaux has established, that the event corresponded with the prediction precisely, "to a month. For in the

month Nisan, was the decree granted to Ezra; and in the middle of the same month, Nisan, Christ suffered, just four hundred and ninety years after." He was "crucified in the beginning of the Jewish passover, which always commenced in the middle of the month Nisan."\*

But the fact is marked, with equal distinctness, by the events which were immediately to follow. The "city and the sanctuary" were to be "destroyed"—and ruin and "desolation," to rush upon it like an "inundation." How surely this succeeded the crucifixion of our Lord, and how dreadfully correct is the terrible image of a flood, in describing so fearful a devastation, will be seen in our future consideration of the destruction of Jerusalem. The "sacrifice and the oblation" were to "cease." This is one of the most decisive and impressive evidences of the truth of prophecy that can even be demanded. It stands, the permanent memorial, at once of divine fidelity, and of the inspiration of these writings, to this hour. It is a fact which cannot be controverted; and this early prediction of it, and of the time when it should take place, defies the struggles of skepticism to shake its authority. We have seen the whole world, acting as by one impulse, presenting sacrifices, as a propitiation for offence, to the Deity: we see the whole world, by common consent, after the offering of the body of Jesus once for all, abandoning, almost at the same time, their universal principle, and discontinuing them. We see the Jews, tenacious beyond all measure of their rites and ceremonies, in their zeal to preserve them, crucifying the Lord of Life: we see this very people, as an immediate consequence, driven from their country, the very rites which they dyed their hands in blood to secure, abolished; and from that hour to the present the daily sacrifice has ceased, according to the prediction of their own prophet.

2. The place was not indeed the subject of direct prophecy, but was indirectly shadowed out, in the custom of offering up, whatever animal was, according to divine appointment, to be considered as a "sin-offering," "without the camp." Thus the apostle also speaks—"the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate." Golgotha, or Calvary, where our Lord was crucified, was a rocky hill on the western side of Jerusalem, used as a place of execution, and at length becoming a sort of charnel-house, received the titles by which it is distinguished in the gospels, and which signify *the place of a scull*. While we are taught



to consider the place of our Lord's sufferings as marked out early in the rites of the former dispensation, we see the Jews in this, as in every other instance, fulfilling the prediction without having any such intention. In crucifying our Lord "without the gate," they were only acting on their invariable habit, never to suffer a malefactor to be put to death within the city. Having first falsely accused, and afterwards unjustly condemned him, as an offender, they led him forth to execution, under the name of a criminal, to the spot where criminals suffered; thus, they were actually, although ignorantly, first treating him like the heifer and scape-goat, as a propitiatory victim, and afterwards leading him forth to the very place where all such victims were offered.

3. The manner of his death, is so largely detailed, and so minutely described, that it can be necessary to do little more, than place before you the various particulars relating to it, to be found in the prophets, without comment. He was to be betrayed and *sold*—Zechariah, personifying the Saviour, says—"They weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver:"\* exactly the sum for which Judas covenanted, and which he received, as the execrable reward of treachery. Well might the prophet exclaim, "A goodly price that I was prized at of them!"—And the use that was made of this hire of unrighteousness was foreseen and foretold. "And the Lord said unto me, Cast it unto the potter. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter, in the house of the Lord." Thus, Judas "cast down the thirty pieces of silver in the temple"—and the money was applied to the purchase of "the potter's field," and from the combination of circumstances attending the whole transaction, it was called, and retained the title, "Aceldama," "the field of blood." He was to be *forsaken* by his disciples. "I looked for some to take pity, and there was none; and for comforters, but I found none."† The immediate connexion of these words justifies this application of them. He was to be condemned both by *Jews and by heathens*. "The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his Anointed."‡ He was to pass the *forms of a trial*. "He is taken from prison and from judgment"—or as Bishop Lowth more accurately and impressively renders the passage—"By an oppressive judgment, he was cut "off"§—He was to die by *the cross*: and to undergo the usual *scourging* previously inflicted upon criminals. "By his stripes we are healed"—"They pierced my hands and my feet."|| He was not only to die, under the imputation of crime, the death of a criminal, but among criminals: "He was num-

\* Zech. xi. 12, et passim.  
 § Lowth's Is. in loc.

† Ps. lxi. 20.  
 || Is. liii. 5. Ps. xxii. 16.

‡ Ps. ii. 2.

bered with the transgressors"—"He made his grave with the wicked."\* The *scorn* that should be poured upon him, nay, the very *language* in which the spectators should reproach him, was foretold. "All they that see me laugh me to scorn; they shoot out the lip, they shake the head saying, He trusted in the Lord, that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him."† His *raiment* was to be divided, and the possession of a part of it to be determined by *lot*. "They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture."‡ The very ingredients that should be presented to him to allay the agony of *thirst*, were not forgotten. "They gave me also gall for my meat, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink."§ The language he should *himself* employ in the agonies of death—"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"|| The *sepulchre* which he should find among the rich: so unlikely on the part of him who was to suffer as a malefactor. "He made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death."¶ What discordancy between the one and the other! Yet both are united by the prophet; and both were accomplished in the event. He died as a criminal, died among thieves; yet found a disciple in Joseph, a rich man of "Arimathea," and a grave in "his new tomb, wherein never man had before been laid."

4. The miracles attending his sufferings were, I cannot but think, anticipated by the prophet Joel. "I will show wonders in the heavens, and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord shall come." It is granted that the connexion of these words relates to some extraordinary effusions of the Holy Spirit, which also Peter applied to the transactions on the day of Pentecost: but these were the signs to precede this outpouring of the Spirit of God; and if the prophecy was fulfilled in reference to the giving of the Holy Spirit on that occasion, the *result* of the Saviour's sufferings, I think these signs, which were to precede that event, received their accomplishment in the miracles (so exactly corresponding with this description) which accompanied the Lord's death.

5. The design of the Messiah's sufferings was never lost sight of, for a moment, by the prophets. If we inquire of Daniel why he was to be "cut off"—the answer is already given, "to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness." In exact correspondence with these

\* Is. liii. 12, 9.

† Ps. xxii. 7, 8.

‡ Ps. xxii. 18.

§ Ps. lxi. 21. See the note at the end.

|| Ps. xxii. 1.

¶ Is. liii. 9.

representations is the testimony of Isaiah, on the same point. "He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows."—"He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed." "All we, like sheep, have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid upon him the iniquity of us all." Under the impulse of the same Spirit, Caiaphas said, when the council were plotting against the Redeemer, "Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. And this spake he not of himself; but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; and not for that nation only, but that he should gather together in one, the children of God that were scattered abroad." I know not what I can add to predictions so explicit, and to a commentary so satisfactory, furnished by the evangelist himself. Yes—I rejoice to recognise in these passages the doctrine of the atonement, because I feel the need of pardon. I rejoice to meet with one who can bear sin, and will bear it away, because I am myself unable to carry the present load which it imposes, and to meet the future misery which it superinduces.—When we read—"He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows"—"The Lord hath laid upon him the iniquity of us all"—we are at once sensible that something very important is intended under language highly figurative. It is natural to look back to the times of the prophet, to the customs of the day, and especially, as the allusion is to a subject altogether spiritual, to the religious institutions with which he was acquainted, for the origin of his symbol, and for the elucidation of his expressions. Far we shall not have proceeded, in that dispensation under which he lived, before we meet with the high priest laying his hand upon the scape-goat, and with it the sins of the congregation, to be borne away by this victim, into the wilderness; and thus the curse was averted from their heads to whom it belonged. Here we find the meaning of the passage: the allusion is most impressive; and conviction, at once of the beauty and propriety of the language, and of the important doctrine couched under the figure employed, darts across the mind like a flash of lightning. O Friend of friendless sinners! be to me what the scape-goat was to Israel; and remove from me the burden of iniquity too heavy to be endured!

Such are the predictions respecting the sufferings of the Messiah; it is time to pass on to those which relate,



## II. TO HIS EXALTATION.

The prophecies which respect this event, and its gradual stages, may be arranged under these particulars: his Resurrection, his Glorification, his Intercession, and his Universal Empire.

1. His Resurrection. At present we have nothing to do with proving the truth of history; this belongs to another department, and to one which we have already, at least partially, occupied. We have to discover what are the representations of prophecy respecting the Messiah; and we compare these with facts generally, nay universally, received as authentic: and so far as they correspond, we deem the arguments, in favour of revelation, deducible from prophecy, forcible and conclusive. It had been said, in the name of Christ, by his great progenitor, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell," or in the state of separate spirits, "neither wilt thou suffer thy Holy One to see corruption."—We assume that he "being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit upon his throne: he seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in " a separate state, "neither did his flesh see corruption." For, as the apostle Peter justly argued, there could be but two objects of reference in this language of David—either to himself, or to the Messiah. If it referred to himself, it was never accomplished, for his flesh did see corruption—he was "both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with his brethren to this day." The conclusion was perfectly reasonable that it referred to the Messiah, and the more so in that respect of him it was accomplished in their sight; for he added, "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses."

2. His Glorification. The triumph of his ascension was anticipated, and the distinct objects of it stated. "He hath ascended up on high, he hath led captivity captive, he hath received gifts for men, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them." "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and the king of glory shall come in." "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." Such were to be the victories, and such the exaltation of the Messiah. Some have denied that Jesus ever assumed such a high character, or answered so elevated a description. But if this be admitted, then have words no meaning, nor is language a safe vehicle of communication between man and man. He says, "I came forth from the Father, and am come

into the world; again I leave the world and go to the Father.” What can these words imply, but that he came originally from the state to which he was then returning; and that he was about to resume his native and eternal dignity? In the same manner he prays, “Father, glorify thou me, with thine ownself, with the glory which I *had* with thee, *before the world was.*” We do not wish to put forced and unnatural constructions upon language: but to ascertain and to abide by the plain and simple meaning of Scripture, which is usually expressed in terms the most obvious and intelligible.

3. His Intercession. Isaiah says, not merely that “he bare the sin of many,” but that “he made intercession for the transgressors.” And the apostle says, “He ever liveth to make intercession for us.” The scheme of salvation is a plan which has manifestly been pursued through all successions of time. And the design is still carrying on. When Jesus pronounced “It is finished”—he proclaimed the completion of his expiation for sin, and of his triumphs over our adversaries: but he is still engaged in the great plan of human redemption; and every day, while he intercedes, is adding new accessions to his empire. Hence another particular in prophecy is,

4. His Universal Dominion. He is to have “the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession.” In this, as in most other cases, the predictions of Daniel are singularly explicit. Nebuchadnezzar saw an image of immense dimensions and of terrible majesty, composed of heterogeneous materials, which the prophet explained to typify a succession of inferior kingdoms arising out of that of which Nebuchadnezzar was the head. He saw also a stone cut out without hands smite the image, and all its parts were broken in pieces, dispersed, consumed—while the stone “became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.” Thus he interprets it of the empire of the Messiah. “In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.”

These are, I believe, the leading predictions to be found in the Scriptures respecting the sufferings and the exaltation of the Messiah. Upon the whole, we repeat that it is such a character as imagination could never have delineated, nor even conceived. Isaiah, accordingly, when he connects the description of a “visage marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men,” with a future glory and dignity, which shall “shut the mouths of kings”—adds “many were astonished at thee!”—The astonish-

ment then excited, still continues, and alters its character in respect of different persons, as it arises from different sources.

Angels were astonished. Their amazement arose from their knowledge of his majesty. They, who had been accustomed to see his throne higher than the morning stars, and to worship at his feet, were overwhelmed with astonishment to see him assume the form of a servant; and to witness the indignities to which he voluntarily subjected himself—indignities received from his creatures. The potsherds of the earth did not, in this instance, strive with each other, but with their Maker; and man crucified him whom angels adored. With what interest, and with what increasing wonder, must they have seen, when they attended as his servants, divine submission amidst human ingratitude, rising more eminently into notice every step of his journey, till Gethsemane and Calvary crowned his humiliation!

Demons were astonished. Jesus beheld Satan falling as lightning from heaven. And with what amazement, as well as indignation, must the powers of darkness have seen the ruin of their empire, the renown and stability of which they had argued from the depth of his weakness! and this, in the hour when they most of all anticipated success! Their stratagems prevailed, and Jesus died: but at that moment the trumpet of victory, on the part of the Saviour, resounded through the caverns of mortality, and the throne of death trembled under him, as a signal of its final destruction.

Men were astonished. The Jews were terrified at their own work. The darkness of the heavens surprised them in the midst of their railings, and closed the mouth of blasphemy for a season. The attention of the malefactor, expiring by his side, was arrested. His amazement rose into reverence; his reverence into faith; and he said, "Lord, remember me, when thou comest into thy kingdom." The soldier, inured to scenes of blood, shrank from this spectacle of mingled majesty and horror; and the centurion said, "Truly this man was the Son of God." The mixed multitude were moved. Those, whose vain curiosity, and unfeeling hearts had drawn them together to that sight, "beholding the things that were done, smote their breasts, and returned."

The world are still astonished. The tale spread. It formed the subject of conversation, and gained daily and hourly progress. It is still agitated; and still excites admiration. Those who feel no interest beyond this, can neither gainsay nor resist the evidences which support this marvellous event, and which confound them. Some believe to the saving of the soul. Some behold and despise, wonder and perish.



Christians and converts are astonished. Theirs is the amazement of gratitude and love. They gaze with holy wonder on the visage which was so marred, and marred for them. Every line of agony which they trace upon that meek, and resigned, and bruised countenance; deformed by blows, defiled by injury, and foul with weeping; was destined to be ploughed upon their hearts; had he not interposed his person for theirs, and sustained the penalties which they had incurred. O blessed Saviour, many were astonished at thee; and the emotions communicated from the fathers to their children, through so many successive ages, have not yet subsided!

But astonishment breaks into exultation, when we see him springing from his lowest degradation to the possession of his ancient dignity; and, anticipating his eternal empire, we join the inspired psalmist, in saying, "Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands: They shall perish, but thou remainest: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end."

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## NOTE

### TO THE TWELFTH LECTURE.

THE WRITERS of the Ancient Universal History have these criticisms upon the mixture presented to our Lord upon the cross. "This mixture was probably given to intoxicate the sufferers, that they might be less sensible of their torment; and Jesus might refuse it upon that very account, because it became him, who was then going to offer himself a free and voluntary sacrifice to God for the sins of men, and was to show them a pattern how to bear afflictions with due resignation to the divine will, to avoid a thing which might too far discompose his thoughts, and show too ill a precedent to his followers.

"One of the evangelists makes this mixture to consist of myrrh and wine; and another, of vinegar and gall. Hence, some suppose, that though the former was usually given on such occasions, yet the soldiers, out of spite and contempt, gave him the latter, which would have a contrary effect. But we much doubt whether the Romans, naturally delighting in being cruel to persons in misery, could be capable of so much compassion towards criminals. Their barbarous sports and spectacles argue rather the reverse. Besides, the *vinum myrrhatum*, we are told, (*Plin. l. xiv. c. 13.*) was highly esteemed by them, insomuch that one of the laws of the twelve tables forbade their dead to be washed or sprinkled with it. And who can imagine, that they would bestow it on such criminals, as they condemned to this kind of death, which was held in the greatest ignominy and reproach among them?

"It is more likely, that the evangelist, who wrote in the *Hebrew* or *Syriac*, made use of the word, מר, *mar*, which signifies bitterness, or any bitter ingredient, and that his translator mistook it for מור, *mor*, *myrrh*; and thus the two evangelists will be reconciled, and the prophecy fulfilled, *They gave me gall to eat, and, in my thirst, vinegar to drink.* (Ps. lxix. 21.) For the whole tenour of this psalm seems to be a continued prophecy of Christ's sufferings, as well as of that judicial blindness, ruin, and dispersion, which fell on the impenitent Jews."

*Anc. Univ. Hist. Vol. X. B. ii. chap. 11, note Z, p. 601. London edit. 1747.*

## LECTURE XIII.

THE PROPHECY OF JESUS CHRIST RESPECTING THE DESTRUCTION  
OF JERUSALEM.

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 LUKE XIX. 41—44.

And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least, in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another: because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.

Is this the language of an impostor? Are these the emotions of a deceiver? Will this tender and disinterested deportment, these humane and compassionate feelings, these warm and natural appeals to the heart and to the conscience, accord with the pretensions of the hypocrite, and with the concealed cruelty of a determined assassin of human repose? For the character of Jesus, if it were only assumed, was a desperate and barbarous assault upon the peace and security of society: because, at such a period, and with the expectations awakened throughout the world, it could not fail to produce a general and a powerful effect. There is no alternative: you must either admit his claims, supported as they are by the uniform consistency, and by the unparalleled purity of his conduct; or you must rank him among those deceivers, who availed themselves of the prevailing prejudices of the people to raise themselves to distinction; and thus consider his whole life as one continued succession of specious operations covering the darkest principles. It will require a monstrous faith to believe, and a bold tongue to avow, such an injurious conclusion, relative to such a character as that of Jesus Christ, so elucidated and supported by the consistency of a

most holy life. To imagine him a good, an amiable, and a benevolent man, and to associate these qualities with assumed and false pretensions, is an incongruity which must be left to the mind of a skeptic to comprehend and to receive; but which can never be reconciled to any acknowledged principles of sound and impartial reasoning. To escape so absurd a conclusion, we must regard the conduct this evening detailed, as the natural result of the most tender, the most compassionate feelings. The text is the voice of insulted friendship, the complaint of abused goodness, the accent of divine pity. It is the language of a physician, watching the progress of a disease which must be mortal, because the patient obstinately rejects prescriptions which alone could be effectual; and refuses the proffered interposition of his assistance and ability. It is the language of a shepherd, seeking his wandering flock, when he sees them ready to perish, and they refuse to hear his voice, and to follow him. It is the language of a father, in the midst of a rebellious family, when his children choose the road to death, and spurn his wise and gracious counsels. It is the language of a Saviour, stretching out his hands in vain to a guilty world: shedding neglected tears upon inveterate enemies; and addressing himself all the day long to a gainsaying and crooked generation, who disregard him.

In the dispensations of God, we find mercy mingling with judgment, goodness with severity, light with darkness.—Sometimes, the divine presence beams forth, irradiated by love, and divested of every frown of terror, of every threatening, formidable feature. It is the voice of a parent that speaks to us; and his lips drop encouragement. We lose our apprehensions in a sense of his kindness; and hasten to his feet to receive his smiles. This night the fire of divine indignation breaks forth to consume the guilty. We listen with dismay as the thunder rolls, and shudder as the storm passes by, lest an arrow flaming with vengeance should be lodged in our own bosoms—because we also have grievously offended. We walk over the graves of transgressors with a trembling foot, because our hearts beat conscious of ingratitude and rebellion. Our God is a consuming fire. Does he, therefore, change? Is he the author of confusion? It is impossible! We ourselves create the darkness which we fear; and he restores the peace which we had forfeited. His object is one and undivided; from the line of his own great scheme he never deviates; and it comprehends human interests as well as his own. To maintain his own honour, to support his own dignity, and to promote his own glory, enters deeply into all his just designs; and (O matchless condescension!) he blends these noble purposes with the security of human happiness.



He never loses sight of this united object, whether he encourage the fearful, or punish the guilty; whether he clothe himself in love or in terror; whether he stay in compassion, the calamities which distract nations; or, in righteous indignation, shake them with the thunder of his power. There is an awful mixture of mercy and of justice in the scene exhibited at this moment. Jesus weeps over the city, the impending ruin of which he denounced with all the authority of a judge. He had tears for human sufferings; but he had also punishments for human guilt. The destruction of Jerusalem will decidedly prove, that if God deigns to visit man with his favours, he no less resolves to visit, even in his own people, their transgressions with a rod, and their iniquities with stripes. Well might Josephus say, (for to him, I apprehend, belong the words, which, according to the custom of ancient historians, he puts into the mouth of Eleazar)—“Where is now that glorious city, the metropolis of the Jewish nation, surrounded by impregnable walls, guarded by so many towers, and strong holds, yet scarcely sufficient to contain its hostile preparations, and so many myriads of men as were fighting to defend it—what is now become of that city, in which God himself was thought to reside? It is overturned from its very foundations; and no memorial of it is left, except the ruins of *their* camp by whom it was subverted still scattered among its vestiges.” “Where is the Jew who can contemplate these scenes, and desire longer the light of the sun, could he even live undisturbed? Who is such an enemy to his country—where is the timid wretch, that does not think himself to have lived too long? Would to God death had sealed our eyes ere they had beheld that sacred city fired by hostile hands—and that holy temple with such impiety laid waste! But since it is now all over—since every hope has vanished, every noble hope which nourished us, that, perhaps, at least, we might revenge these things upon our enemies—since we alone are left to this hard condition—it remains only that we nobly die!”\*—If we revolt from the purpose which this address recommended, we cannot but be moved at the misery which it deplores. A more awful lesson to nations cannot be imagined; and a more affecting commentary upon our Lord’s prediction, relative to this event, cannot be produced. “And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least, in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children

\* See note 1, at the end of the Lecture.

within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation."

That Jerusalem was to sustain a regular siege; that its inhabitants were to be exposed to the most terrible calamities, and the most certain ruin; and that the city was not to be partially wasted, but totally destroyed; may be gathered from this single passage. But the event was of such importance, that it was repeatedly introduced by our Lord, in both his public and his private discourses; and on one memorable occasion, as he was seated with his disciples upon the Mount of Olives, an elevation which commanded a full view of the city and of the temple, he entered into a detail of a variety of interesting and minute particulars, respecting this dreadful revolution. Three, out of four of the evangelists, recorded his words, with very little difference as to language, and still less as to facts. It is worthy your remark, that John, the only one of them who did *not* record the prophecies of his master on this point, survived the desolation: the rest, according to the most accurate calculations, died before Jerusalem was besieged by the Romans. It cannot, therefore, be pretended, that the passages, to which I am about to refer you, were forgeries subsequent to the event itself: since those, who may question whether the evangelists were all dead, John excepted, before that time, cannot deny that the gospels were all published to the world before these fearful scenes were acted. From the united narratives of these writers, we shall gather the amount of our Lord's predictions; and from the testimony of Josephus, an unexceptionable source of information, on account of his being an esteemed historian, and eye-witness of these transactions, as well as confirmed in the principal facts by the best Roman writers of the day, I shall collect the circumstances of the siege, which furnished a full accomplishment of the prophecy of Jesus Christ. From this plan, it will appear,

First, That the SIGNS which were to precede this event were distinctly marked;

Secondly, The CIRCUMSTANCES of the siege itself were expressly foretold;

Thirdly, The TIME for the accomplishment of these things was absolutely fixed;

Fourthly, It was predetermined and predicted, that this destruction should be TOTAL and FINAL.

First, The SIGNS which were to precede this event were distinctly marked. Now, these were singularly important, and repeatedly pressed upon the disciples, because some of them were to witness these very calamities, and it was necessary that they should be ap-

prized of the signals of their approach, that they might escape the sudden destruction. It is not to be supposed that they would easily let them slip from their memories; and our Lord professes to furnish them with indications so sure, that they might, by them, as certainly know the coming on of this awful period, as they might learn, by the budding of vegetation, the advances of the spring. "Behold the fig-tree, and all the trees: When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves, that summer is now nigh at hand: So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye, that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand;"—for this fatal era to the Jewish nation stood closely connected with the increasing spread of the gospel among the Gentiles.

1. FALSE PROPHETS were to arise before this dreadful visitation, and were to continue to deceive the people to its very consummation. To wave the testimony of Gamaliel, given before the council, and recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, relative to two imposters "in those days," and with which every one in this assembly is acquainted; it may be more interesting to produce some instances with which you may be less conversant. "Take heed," said the Saviour, "that ye be not deceived; for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and the time draweth near; go ye not, therefore, after them." "False Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall show signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect. But take ye heed; behold, I have foretold you all things." "Wherefore, if they shall say, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not." And Josephus testifies, that previous to the wars of Judea, the Jews were divided and distracted between thieves and enchanters. The one impoverished, the other deluded them; and during the administration of Felix they multiplied beyond measure. "The city," said he, "was thronged with magicians and impostors, who prevailed upon the multitude to *follow them into the desert*, promising to show them signs and miracles performed by the power of God. Many were seduced; and suffered for their credulity: for they were recalled by Felix and punished." He proceeds to produce an example among others: and says, "At that time a certain man came from Egypt to Jerusalem, calling himself a prophet, who stirred up the people to follow him to the Mount called Olivet, situated about five furlongs from Jerusalem, by assuring them that from that spot they should see the walls of the city fall to the ground, through which breach he would give them entrance into it. But Felix, having received intelligence of this circumstance, armed his soldiers, and marching out of Jerusalem a large company



both of horse and foot, assaulted and slew four hundred of them; two hundred he secured; and, for the Egyptian—he fled, and was heard of no more.” The same infatuation prevailed during the siege of the city. Every attempt to open the eyes of the people proved altogether nugatory. And this strong delusion hastened and sealed their utter ruin. When one of the porches of the temple was fired by the Romans, there perished six thousand people, men, women, and children; and Josephus adds—“A false prophet occasioned the death of all this multitude: who had preached that day in the city, and commanded them to go into the temple, and there receive tokens of deliverance.”\*

2. Great CONVULSIONS were to precede this awful and extraordinary event. These were foretold partly in figurative, and partly in explicit, language. The darkening of the sun, and of the moon; the falling of the stars, and the shaking of the powers of heaven, are all strong, metaphorical expressions, signifying the struggles of ambition, the convulsions of kingdoms, and the eclipses of the glory of princes; for “these are stars, indeed, and sometimes falling ones!”—But lest the figure, sublime as it is, should be misunderstood, he expressly says, “Ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars—nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.” Just before the destruction of Jerusalem, the mighty empire of Rome was rent with internal divisions; and her princes occupied but a precarious throne. The imperial diadem was scarcely fixed by intrigue, before it was dislodged by violence. At the same period there were riots at Jerusalem—and the spirit of anarchy swept over all the surrounding nations. Besides these political commotions, nature was to share the general distraction, and to increase the general calamity. “And great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilence;” these fearful ministers of divine displeasure punctually fulfilled the words of the Saviour. Rome felt through all the members of her vast body the effects of famine, in the days of Claudius; and the distress was general throughout Judea. The Apostle Paul zealously promoted the contributions of one class of Christians for the relief of another. Rome suffered the shock of an earthquake: and these convulsions were no less general than the famine. And in the same way, to the same extent, the whole was accomplished. Nor were the disciples exempted from calamities which affected all nations: for besides the share which they were compelled to sustain in these things, it had been expressly foretold that they should be dispersed and wasted by the most cruel persecutions. They shall lay their hands on you, and persecute

\* See note 2, at the end.

you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake. And some of you shall they cause to be put to death." The well-known general persecutions of the primitive churches—the personal sufferings and sacrifices of the apostles; the support which they received from him who promised them "a mouth and wisdom, which all their adversaries should not be able to gainsay or to resist;" render it absolutely unnecessary to say one word on the fidelity of the prophecy on this point.

3. There were to be "FEARFUL SIGHTS AND SIGNS from heaven." Josephus enumerates at large a number of prodigies which happened at this time. "On the day of Pentecost, the priests, on entering the temple at night, felt the whole place tremble—and heard a voice saying, Let us depart hence."—He also relates, that the son of a common villager, four years before the breaking out of the war, continually lamented the approaching destruction of the city. He was neither to be silenced nor moved by the stripes inflicted by his countrymen, nor the more cruel torments which he suffered when delivered over by them to the Romans. His cry was still, "Wo, wo, to Jerusalem!"—During seven years and five months, with unaltered voice and unwearied step, he paced the devoted city, denouncing its ruin; and after seeing the beginning of those evils which he foretold, as he was upon the walls of Jerusalem, a stone from one of the Roman engines smote him—and thus he died.\* The same historian records some signs in the air before sunset. But the objection to all this is, that the Jewish historian was credulous: if this supposition be advanced to invalidate his testimony, I must remark that Tacitus, the famed Roman historian, was equally so: for he relates, without any sort of collusion with Josephus, some of those signs which the Jew records. And if the historians were both deceived, so were the people—the people of both nations—for these things were most surely believed among them, and were perhaps never questioned till in these last days scoffers have arisen. Among the signs of Jerusalem's approaching destruction was,

4. A GENERAL DIFFUSION of the GOSPEL. The acts of the apostles will discover them (even those of them whose Jewish prejudices for a season struggled with their enlarged commission) dispersing themselves through different parts of the Gentile world; and Christianity was disseminated, where their personal presence was withdrawn, by means of the vast variety of their interesting

\* See note 3, at the end.

epistles, and the local labours of men whose faith they knew, and whom they appointed with themselves for the work of the ministry. These very writings, in their style and manner of address, mark considerable progress made by different churches in the knowledge of Christ; and speak of the increasing power of the gospel in other parts. In the days of Nero, it appears from the testimony of Tacitus, the professors of Christianity were very numerous. And while this was its state before Jerusalem was laid in ruins, this very awful event gave it a new impulse, a new direction, a new triumph. Conviction enlightened the minds of many, while these things were yet in their own remembrance; and they could compare the predictions so full and explicit, with the vivid recollections which they themselves had of those dreadful scenes to which they related.

Secondly: The CIRCUMSTANCES of the siege itself were no less expressly foretold.

1. The planting of the ROMAN STANDARD before the holy city: for the very ground round about it was considered holy. "When ye shall see the abomination of desolation stand in the holy place."—The eagles of Rome were assigned, in her senseless mythology, a place among her deities; and that which was worshipped as an idol, deserved the name of an abomination, and would justly be so deemed by the Jews, who had learned, (although the precept was too often forgotten,) "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God; and him only shalt thou serve." But as death and war, bloodshed and calamity, rioted wherever the imperial standard was planted, it was well denominated "the abomination of desolation." These circumstances also decided that Jerusalem was to fall by the hand of Rome.

2. Some were to ESCAPE the flood of ruin. "When ye shall see Jerusalem encompassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh." The Romans not only intrenched round the city but entirely encircled it with a wall; a project which was executed beyond the expectation of those who attempted it. In three days they erected a wall of thirty-nine furlongs;\* and crowned it with thirteen towers. "Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto: for these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may

\* Five miles.



be fulfilled." But how could they escape at such a time? He who gave the command provided the means. The Roman chief who first assailed the city, did it at a moment when the Jews were not prepared for a siege, and according to human calculation he might have succeeded: but he abandoned it unexpectedly; and in so doing gave opportunity to many considerable Jews to escape; among whom the Christians left the devoted spot; and it has been asserted, that none of them perished in the siege of Jerusalem.

3. The CALAMITIES of those who REMAINED are expressed in very forcible terms; but all language must fall short of the facts. Our Lord affirms, "There shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." Josephus declares that he knows not how to record the scenes which he witnessed, and that all the evils that ever befell any other nation, were small in comparison with those which then alighted upon his unhappy countrymen. We have already, on another occasion, related that a mother devoured her own child, through the extremity of the famine. It was when he heard of this dreadful act, that Titus swore the entire extirpation of the people, and the utter ruin of the city. I cannot, out of respect to your feelings, as well as my own, enter into the detail: let those who doubt, read the wars of the Jews by Josephus, and he will find a succession of chapters on the dreadful evils which the wretched Jews sustained during this unparalleled siege. Such was the excess of mortality, that unable to bury their dead, they were compelled to precipitate the bodies over their walls into the neighbouring valleys.

Thirdly, The TIME for the accomplishment of these things was absolutely fixed—"This generation shall not pass till all be fulfilled." Now, the very first thing that strikes us here is the apparent improbability of such an event at such a moment. The Jews were then in league with the Romans. "We have no king but Cesar," was their cry. The very reason assigned by the council, for wishing to destroy Jesus was a fear of provoking their conquering allies to jealousy, by the noise of his wonderful works. Yet it is equally true, that Josephus, who died within ninety years after Christ, was actively engaged in these very wars, and lived to publish a history of them.

Fourthly, It was predetermined and predicted, that this destruction should be TOTAL and FINAL.

When Titus solemnly declared he would utterly waste the city,

he designed to save the temple. But Jesus had said, "that one stone should not be left upon another." The voice of prophecy was stronger than the voice of the general. In vain he had given a strict charge to guard it from injury—a soldier, "moved," said Josephus, "by a divine impulse," rising on the shoulders of his fellow, cast a brand into the sanctuary. Titus rushed to the spot to animate his men to extinguish the flames; but he threatened, entreated, nay, even punished in vain: the fury of the soldiers was not to be controlled—they increased the burning.—Alas! all was consumed. Thus perished a temple, which is said to have been built of marble so white, that it appeared a mountain of snow: to have been so ornamented with gold, even on the outside, as almost to render it painful to look at it when the sun shone: and formed of stone cemented, of an incredible magnitude. Then began a tremendous slaughter, in which neither sex nor age found mercy. The city was surrounded by innumerable crosses. And so entirely was it afterwards razed from its foundations, that a ploughshare passed over its whole extent and compass.

The apostate Julian, with the express design to falsify the predictions of Christ, attempted to rebuild it. You shall receive an account of this transaction from an adversary to Christianity. In the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, it is said "Gregory Nazianzen published his account of the miracle" (by which the scheme was defeated) before the expiration of the same year, 363. He boldly asserted that this preternatural event was not disputed by the infidels; and this assertion, strange as it may seem, is confirmed by the unexceptionable testimony of Ammianus Marcellinus. This philosophic soldier, who loved the virtues, without adopting the prejudices of his master, has recorded in his judicious and candid history of his Own Times, the extraordinary obstacles which interrupted the restoration of the temple of Jerusalem. Whilst Alypius, assisted by the governors of the province, urged with vigour and diligence the execution of the work, horrible balls of fire breaking out near the foundations with frequent and reiterated attacks, rendered the place from time to time inaccessible to the scorched and blasted workmen, and the victorious elements continuing in this manner obstinately and resolutely bent, as it were, to drive them to a distance, the undertaking was abandoned." Gibbon adds—"Such an authority *should* satisfy a believing, and *must* astonish an incredulous mind. *Yet* a philosopher may still require the original evidence of impartial and intelligent spectators."—Yes, he *may*—and a man *may* deny the plainest matter of fact that can be presented to the senses. Mark the ungenerous insinuation, and

its disagreement with all that he was before compelled to concede. He recited the testimony of a heathen, a scholar, a friend to the undertaking, who confesses that it was abandoned, because fire consumed the workmen: he acknowledges that the historian was a "philosophic soldier; and that his history respected that of which he was an eye-witness: that it is candid and judicious—that his testimony is unexceptionable."—*Yet* a philosopher may require still farther evidence.—We have no farther evidence to produce, and we despair of communicating conviction to minds which can reject this. Yet time has added one more support to the fact.—The city has never been built on the same spot to this hour. With whatever feelings a philosophic skeptic may regard Jerusalem sitting in the dust, a Christian, while he contemplates her ashes, will remember, that all this widowhood and calamity have overtaken her, because "she knew not the day of her visitation."

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## NOTES

### TO THE THIRTEENTH LECTURE.

NOTE 1.—Part of the oration of Eleazar, referred to, and translated in the opening of the preceding Lecture. Πῃ δ' ἡ μεγάλη πόλις ἡ τῶν πάντων Ἰσραὴλ γένεσις μητρόπολις, ἡ τοσούτοις μὲν ἐρυμνῇ τειχῶν περιβάλλοις, τοσαῦτα δ' αὐτῆς φρεσὶ καὶ μεγάλῃ πύργων προβεβλημένη, μόλις δὲ χωρεῖσθαι τὰς εἰς τὸν πόλεμον παρασκευάς, τοσαύτας δὲ μυριάδας ἀνδρῶν ἔχουσα τὰν ὑπὲρ αὐτῆς μαχομένων; πῃ γέγονεν ἡμῖν ἡ τὸν Θεὸν ἔχειν οἰκίστην πεπιστευμένη; πρόρριζος ἐκ βάθρων ἀνηρπασαί, καὶ μόνον αὐτῆς μνημεῖον ὑπολέλειπται, τὸ τῶν ἀνηρηκότων αὐτὴν στρατόπεδον, ἔτι τοῖς λειψάνοις ἐποικῶν. Πρεσβύται δὲ δύσῃνοι τῇ σποδῇ τῶν τεμνέντων παρακάθονται, καὶ γυνῆαι ὀλίγαι πρὸς ὕβριν αἰσχίστην ὑπὸ τῶν πολεμίων τετραημέραι. ταῦτα τίς ἐν νυκτὶ βαλλόμενος ἡμῶν καρτερεῖται τὸν ἥλιον ὄρεῖν, καὶ τὸν δυνάστην ζῆν ἀκινδύνως; τίς οὖν τῆς πατρίδος ἐχθρὸς, ἡ τίς οὖν ἀνάνδρος καὶ φιλόψυχος, ὥς μὴ καὶ περὶ τῶν μέχρι νῦν ζῆσαι μετανοεῖν; ἀλλ' εἰδὲ πάντες εἰσέδωκεν, πρὶν τὴν ἱερὰν ἐκείνην πόλιν χερσὶν ἰδεῖν κατασκαπτομένην πολεμίων, πρὶν τὸν ναὸν τὸν ἅγιον οὕτως ἀνοσίως ἐξορρωγμένον. ἐπεὶ δὲ ἡμᾶς οὐκ ἀγεννητοῦ ἐλπίς ἐβδόκησεν ὥς τάχα τῶν δυνήσεσθαι πολεμίων ὑπὲρ αὐτῆς ἀμυνέσθαι, φρεσὶ δὲ γέγονε νῦν, καὶ μόνως ἡμᾶς ἐπὶ τῆς ἀνάγκης κατὰλόιπε, σπένσωμεν καλῶς ἀποθανεῖν.

*Jos. de Bel. Jud. lib. vii. p. 1322, tom. ii. Hud. edit. Fol.*

NOTE 2.—The following extracts will confirm what has been advanced in the Lecture respecting the deceptions practised upon the multitude by deceivers, as foretold by our Lord. Of magicians and false prophets, Josephus says—Συνέστη δὲ πρὸς τούτοις εἴς τις ἕτερον πονηρῶν, χειρὶ μὲν καθαρώτερον, ταῖς γνώμαις δὲ ἀσεβέστερον, ὅπερ ἔθεν ἡτλὸν τῶν σφαγέων τὴν εὐδαιμονίαν τῆς πόλεως ἐλυμνηματο. πλάσι γὰρ ἀνθρώποι καὶ ἀπατεῶνες, προσχηματὶ θείας, νεωτερισμῶς καὶ με-



ταβολὰς πραγματευόμενοι, δαιμονῶν τὸ πλῆθος ἀνέπειδον, καὶ προήγον εἰς τὴν ἑρῴδιαν, ὡς ἐκεῖ τὰ θεῶν δείξαντος αὐτοῖς σημεῖα ἐλευθερίας. ἐπὶ ταῦτοις ὁ Φηλιξ, ἰδοὺς γὰρ ἀποστάτας εἶναι καταβολήν, πέμψας ἵππεις καὶ περὶς ὀπλίτας, πολὺ πλῆθος διέφθειρε.

*Jos. de Bello Jud. lib. ii. cap. xiii. tom. ii. p. 1075. § 4. Huds. edit.*

Of the Egyptian who allured the people to the Mount of Olives, he gives the following account:—Μεῖζονι δὲ ταύτης πληγῇ Ἰσδαίως ἐκάκωσεν ὁ Αἰγύπτιος ψευδοπροφήτης. παραγενόμενος γὰρ εἰς τὴν χώραν, ἀνδραπος, γόνος, καὶ προφῆτης πίσιν ἐπιθεῖς εαυτῷ, περὶ τρισμυρίας μὲν ἀθροίζει τῶν ἡπατημένων. περὶ αὐτῶν δὲ αὐτὸς ἐκ τῆς ἐρημίας εἰς τὸ Ἐλαιῶν καλεσμένον ὄρος, ἐκείθεν οἷός τε ἦν εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα παρελθεῖν βιάζεσθαι, καὶ κρατητάς τῆς τε Ρωμαϊκῆς φρουρᾶς καὶ τῶν δημοῦ τυραννείων, χρώμενος τοῖς συνεισπεσῶσι δορυφόροις φθάνει δὲ αὐτὸς τὴν ὁρμὴν Φηλιξ ὑπαντιάτας μετὰ τῶν Ρωμαϊκῶν ὀπλιτῶν, καὶ πᾶς ὁ δῆμος συνεφύετο τῆς ἀκμῆς. ὥς τε συμβολῆς γενομένης, τὸν μὲν Αἰγύπτιον θυγνύν μετ' ὀλίγων διαρδαρῆναι δὲ καὶ ζωγρηθῆναι πλείους τῶν συν αὐτῷ· τὸ δὲ λοιπὸν πλῆθος σκεδαρτὸν ἐπὶ τὴν ἑαυτῶν ἑκάστον διαλαθεῖν.

*Jos. de Bello Jud. lib. ii. cap. xiii. tom. ii. p. 1075, 1076. § 5. Huds. edit.*

A false prophet occasioned the death of no less than six thousand persons at once, as related in the Lecture. ἦγον δὲ καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν λοιπὴν σοὴν τὰ ἔξωθεν ἱερῶν. καταφύγει δ' ἐπ' αὐτὴν ἀπὸ τῶν δημοῦ γυναῖκα καὶ παῖδιά, καὶ σύμμικτος ὄχλος πλείους εἰς ἑξακισχίλιους. πρὶν Καίσαρα κρῖναι τί περὶ αὐτῶν ἡ κελῦται τῆς ἡγεμονίας, φερόμενοι τοῖς θυμοῖς οἱ στρατιῶται, τὴν σοὴν ὑφάπτισιν. καὶ συνέειθε μὲν, ῥιπνῶντας αὐτὸς ἐκ τῆς φλογὸς διαρδαρῆναι, τῶν δ' ἐν αὐτῇ περιεσφῶν δ' ἐκ τοσούτων ὑδαίς. ταῦτοις αἰτίαις τῆς ἀπωλείας ψευδοπροφήτης τις κατέστη, κατ' ἐκείνην κηρύξας τὴν ἡμέραν τοῖς ἐπὶ τῆς πόλεως, ὡς “ὁ Θεὸς ἐπὶ τὸ ἱερὸν ἀναβῆναι κελεύει, δεξιόμενος τὰ σημεῖα τῆς σωτηρίας.”

*Joseph. de Bello Jud. lib. vi. cap. v. tom. ii. p. 1281. § 2. Hud. edit.*

These passages are translated, or the substance of them is given, and they are marked as quotations in the preceding Lecture.

NOTE 3.—Among the signs preceding the destruction of Jerusalem, as recorded by Josephus, I only extract those which were alluded to in the Lecture—and especially the account of the countryman whose cry and death are circumstantially related in the preceding pages.

The gate of the temple opened spontaneously. ἡ δὲ ἀνατολικὴ πύλη τῶν ἐνδοτέρων, χαλκῇ μὲν ἦτο καὶ σιδηρατώτῃ, κλειομένη δὲ περὶ δέιμόλῃς ὑπ' ἀνδρῶν ἑικοσι, καὶ μοχλοῖς μὲν ἐπερειδομένη σιδηροδέτοις, καταπηγὰς δ' ἔχουσα βαθυιάτας, εἰς τὸν ὄρον ὄντα διηνεκὺς λίθῃ καθιεμένης, ἄφθῃ κατὰ νυκτὸς ὥραν ἑκτὴν, αὐτομάτως ἠνεωγμένη.

*Jos. de Bello Jud. lib. vi. cap. v. tom. ii. p. 1281. § 3. Hud. edit.*

A voice was heard, saying—“Let us depart hence”—κατὰ δὲ τὴν ἑορτὴν, ἡ Πεντηκοστὴ καλεῖται, νύκτωρ οἱ ἱερεῖς παρελθόντες εἰς τὸ ἔνδον ἱερὸν. ὥς περ αὐτοῖς ἔθος ἦν πρὸς τὰς λειτουργίας, πρῶτον μὲν κινήσεως ἀντιλαβέσθαι ἐφασαν καὶ κλύειν, μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα καὶ φωνῆς ἀθρόας, μεταβαίναμεν ἐν τῷ θείῳ.

*Jos. de Bello Jud. lib. vi. cap. v. p. tom. ii. 1282. § 3. Hud. edit.*

The prediction and death of the countryman. Το δὲ ταῦτων φοβερώτερον· Ἰησὺς γὰρ τις υἱὸς Ἀνάβη των ἰδιωτῶν ἀγροῖκος, πρὸ τεσσάρων ἔτων τῆς πολέμου, τὰ μάλιστα τῆς πόλεως εἰρηνευομένης καὶ εὐθηνῆς, ἔλθων εἰς τὴν ἑορτήν, ἐν ἡ σκηνοποιεῖσθαι πάντας ἔθος τῷ Θεῷ κατὰ τὸ ἱερὸν, ἔξαπλῆς ἀναβοῶν ἤρξατο “φωνὴ ἀπ' ἀνατολῆς, φωνὴ ἀπὸ δόσεως, φωνὴ ἀπὸ των τεσσάρων ἀνέμων, φωνὴ ἐπὶ

Ιεροσόλυμα καὶ τὸν ναόν, φωνή ἐπὶ νυμφίους καὶ νύμφας, φωνή ἐπὶ τὸν λαὸν πάν-  
 τα." τῷτο' μεθ' ἡμέραν καὶ νύκτωρ, κατὰ πάντας τὰς γενωπὰς περιήει κεκραγώς,  
 τῶν δ' ἐπισήμων τινὲς ὀημοῦν. ἀγανακτῆσαντες πρὸς τὸ κακόφημον, συλλαμβά-  
 νον τὸν ἀνθρωπον, καὶ πολλαῖς ἀκίζονται πληγῇς. ὁ δ' ἔβ' ὑπὲρ ἑαυτῆ φθεγγά-  
 μενος ἔτ' ἰδιά πρὸς τὰς παίοντας, ὡς καὶ πρῶτερον φωνὰς βῶν διςτέλει νομίσαντες  
 δ' οἱ ἄρχοντες, ὅπερ ἦν, δαιμονιώτερον εἶναι τὸ κίνημα τῶ ἀνδρός, ἀνάγκῃ αὐτὸν  
 ἐπὶ τὸν παρὶ Ρωμαίοις ἔπαρχον, ἔνθα μάλιστα μέχρι ὅσων ξανόμενος, ἔβ' ἰκέτευ-  
 σεν, ἔπ' εὐάκρουσεν ἄλλ' ὡς ἐνὶν μάλιστα τὴν φωνὴν ὀλοφρεῖτως παρεγκλίνων,  
 πρὸς ἐκάστην ἀπεκρίνατο πληγὴν, "αἰ αἰ Ιεροσόλυμοις." τῷ δὲ Αλβίνος διερωτῶντος,  
 ἕτος γὰρ ἔπαρχος ἦν, τίς ἐῖη καὶ πόθεν, καὶ διὰ τί ταῦτα φθέργοιτο, πρὸς ταῦτα  
 μὲν ἔδ' ὅτι'ν ἀπεκρίνατο· τὸν δ' ἐπ' τῇ πόλει θῆνον ἔρων ἔ διέλειπε, μέχει καταγα-  
 νῆς μανίαν ὁ Αλβίνος ἀπέλυσεν αὐτὸν· ὁ δὲ τὸν μέχρι τῶ πολέμου χερόν ἔτε προσήει  
 τιν. τῶν πολιτῶν, ἔπ' ὥφθε λαλῶν, ἀλλὰ κατ' ἡμέραν ὥσπερ ἐνυχὴν μεμελετηκώς,  
 "αἰ αἰ Ιεροσόλυμοις" ἔθην' εἰ. ἔτε δὲ τιν' τῶν τυπλόντων αὐτὸν ὁσημέραι κατηράτο,  
 ἔτε τὰς τροφ' ὡς μεταδιόντας εὐλόγει. μία δὲ πρὸς πάντας ἦν, ἡ σκυθροπὴ κληδὼν  
 ἀπόκρισις. μαλιστα δ' ἐν ταῖς ἐορταῖς ἐκεκράγει, καὶ τῷτ' ἐφ' ἐπὶ ἔτη, καὶ μῆνας  
 πέντε ἔρων, ἔπ' ἡμελυν' ἔτη τὴν φωνὴν, ἔτε ἔκαμεν, μεχρις ἔ κατὰ τὴν πολιτοκίαν  
 ἔργῳ τὰς κληδὼνας ἰδὼν, ἀνεπαύσατο. περιῶν γὰρ ἐπὶ τὰς τείχους, "αἰ αἰ πάλιν τῇ  
 πόλει καὶ τῷ λαῷ καὶ τῷ ναῷ" διαπερυσίον ἔβόα. ὡς δὲ τελευταῖον προσέθικεν αἰ  
 αἰ δὲ καί μοι." λίθος ἐκ τῶ πετροβόλου σχασθεῖς, καὶ πλῆξας αὐτὸν, παραχρῆμα  
 κλίειν. φθεγγόμενος δ' ἔτι τὰς κληδὼνας ἐκείνας, τὴν ψυχὴν ἀφῆκεν.

*Jos. de Bello Jud. lib. vi. cap. v. tom. ii. page 1282, 1283. § 3. Hud. edit.*

These extracts have been already drawn out to great length, otherwise I felt much disposed to transcribe the animated and minute description which Josephus gives of the Temple, in confirmation of that which has been advanced in the preceding Lecture, both respecting its beauty and the circumstances of its destruction. The first is to be found in *Josephus de Bello Judeorum, tom. ii. lib. v. cap. v. page 1225—1230. Huds. edit.* The second, in all its horrible features, is portrayed in *Jos. de Bello Judeorum, tom. ii. lib. vi. cap. 4, page 1276—1279. Huds. edit.* Indeed, the whole of the history of Josephus respecting the wars of the Jews, of which also he was an eye-witness, should be diligently read, as a complete and irresistible evidence of the perfect accomplishment of our Lord's prediction relative to the destruction of Jerusalem, and the terrible circumstances of that disastrous event.

## LECTURE XIV.

## ON PROPHECIES UNFULFILLED.

## ACTS. I. 7.

And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.

## REV. xxii. 18—20.

For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. He which testifieth these things, saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

EVERY thing connected with this world is local and temporary. The empires which human co-operation has raised, are continually changing: the sceptre is passing from hand to hand; and the balance of power among the nations is perpetually shifting. The busy ardent countenance of every man whom we meet, discovers that he is, or thinks that he is, of some importance. But so his fathers thought before him; and they are forgotten; so his children shall think after him, when he sleeps in the dust, and all his talents, his activity, and his services are buried with him. "One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh." We trample the dust of our ancestors under our feet, without reflecting that it once lived, and without recollecting that we also shall be mingled with the clods of the valley.

Religious dispensations are changing also. We see Aaron, God's high priest, going up to the top of Mount Hor, and laying down his robes and his life together. The son descends, arrayed in his father's vestments, to fill his place for a season; and then to bequeath the priestly raiment, and the priestly office, to his successor. The apostle looks back upon the long train, who presided first in the tabernacle, and then to the temple, and says—"These were not suffered to continue, by reason of death." When this order of things were set aside, and the simplicity of the gospel sup-



planted the pomp of Judaism, the same vicissitudes marked the new dispensation; and upon Christian temples we see inscribed the same characters of mutability. The apostles followed the prophets to the land of silence. Their testimony was taken up by pastors and teachers; and God has maintained, without interruption, a standing ministry. These have been called away, every man in his order, to resign their employment, and to give an account of their stewardship. The distribution of ordinances now rests with us, upon whom the care of the churches devolves in the present day, and who wait the signal to depart, and to resign our office to others. We see your countenances change from sabbath to sabbath, as we address you in our respective congregations. We remember that other feet have stood in our pulpits, and that other voices have sounded within the walls which encircle our worshipping assemblies. Every year some of our people drop around us; we perceive the grave opening at our own feet, and death ready to seal our lips, when we shall have pronounced the messages which God commands us to deliver. And not only do we change, but the whole creation fades around us. The heavens are waxing old. The foundations of the earth are decaying. The pillars which prop universal nature bend with age, tremble under the pressure of years, and appear ready to sink beneath the additional weight which time imposes. He alone remains unchanged who created them; and he is saying, "Behold, I make all things new!" These reflections naturally suggest themselves under the circumstances in which I feel myself standing this night—at the close of my present engagement, and for the last time addressing the congregation which the exercises of the past winter had collected and which the present Lecture is to separate.

When we speak of events which either have transpired, or which we anticipate as about to happen, we find no difficulty in fixing dates, which convey our conceptions of the periods, either past or expected, to our brethren of mankind. The last year, or the next month, are terms familiar to us; and they form so considerable a portion of our transitory lives, that men have been at the pains to subdivide them into much smaller parts, so that even a moment bears its proportion, in the calculation of the whole. Time is to us an immense object; an object too large to apprehend without the aid of those subordinate calculations, which, like so many progressive steps, lead us to its summit, and enable us to ascertain its altitude. But it is far otherwise with the Deity. To him—time itself is but a point. It is easy, therefore, to conceive, that his calculations will frequently exceed the narrow limits of our comprehension. Accordingly, we often think that he delays a promise,

from our misconception of the period when it is to be fulfilled. We accuse his chariot-wheels of lingering, when the hour of his appointment has not yet actually arrived. We judge of him by ourselves—a most erroneous standard! We measure his periods by the scale of our own calculations. We forget, that as with him nothing is premature, so nothing can be retarded: that it is not for us “to know the times, or the seasons, which he has reserved in his own hands;” and we are, therefore, disappointed, through our presumption, or our impatience, or our ignorance.

When God speaks of time, he usually speaks of it as a whole, without regarding its little divisions: for it is less in the scale of his eternity, than a moment is to all its accumulated ages, from its commencement to its consummation. There are four or five epochs in time which he sometimes condescends to fix as the measurement of his providence and purposes. The day, when he set the stream of existence flowing: when “the morning stars sang together, and the sons of God shouted for joy:” when a beautiful and harmonious creation emerged from the darkness and discord of chaos. The day, when willing to show his “wrath, and to make his power known,” he broke up “the fountains of the deep,” and opened “the windows of heaven,” and destroyed the earth which he had made, and with it the rebels who had grieved his Spirit; and all flesh died—a remnant excepted, amounting only to “eight souls,” whom he preserved unhurt amidst this universal overthrow. The day, when his only-begotten Son veiled his uncreated glory in human flesh, and tabernacled with men, and “died, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.” The day when “the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be exalted above every high hill, and the nations shall flow unto it;” when the Jew shall stretch forth his hand to Messiah the Prince, and say, “Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord;” when Jehovah will “set his King upon his holy hill of Zion,” and give him “the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession.” The day, when the angel “shall stand upon the sea, and upon the earth, and lift up his hand to heaven, and swear by him that liveth for ever and ever—that there shall be time no longer.” These are the epochs which God fixes as the measurement of his time; and not the reigns of Ahasuerus, and Alexander, and Cæsar, and the long succession of monarchs, from Nimrod to the last who shall sit upon a throne. These are all inferior events, swallowed up and unnoticed in divine calculation. In the prosecution of the subject of this evening, these preliminary remarks may not be altogether useless; and it will be necessary that you should bear in mind the sublime and im-

portant fact, that "one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day."—

The subject of this concluding Lecture is—PROPHECIES UNFULFILLED. It will not be understood from this expression that any have failed, but that some, and those of the most interesting nature, remain to be accomplished. The following remarks will comprise all that I have to advance upon so difficult a subject:

First, That our inquiries after prophecies unfulfilled ought to be modest and cautious.

Secondly, That the Scriptures furnish distinct general outlines of the events predicted, and yet to come, leaving them to be filled up by time.

Thirdly, That it is a duty to keep our eye fixed upon prophecy in tracing the dispensations of providence, and to compare, from time to time, the one with the other; yet rather to apprehend that which is gradually unfolded, than to prejudge that which still is concealed.

First, Our inquiries after prophecies unfulfilled ought to be modest and cautious.

It is the fashion of the present day to confine the line of prophecy almost entirely to this single branch of the subject; and innumerable efforts have lately been made to establish a system of calculation upon the mysterious language of predictions little understood, because at present undetermined by time, as a standard by which the most interesting events may be predetermined with accuracy. It is impossible not to admire the ingenuity, the learning, and the industry, which writers upon this subject have displayed; we cannot be sufficiently thankful to those who lay out so much strength at this eventful period to vindicate eternal providence, and to justify the ways of God to man. Yet it may, perhaps, be doubted whether they have not stepped over the line prescribed by him to whom alone the volume of futurity lies open; and who has written, "things that are revealed belong to us and to our children; but secret things belong to the Lord our God." The design of prophecy appears to be not to give man prescience, but to prove that God possesses it. Time has ever been the great interpreter of prophecy; and the wisdom of God has appeared in this: predictions have been couched in terms sufficiently obscure effectually to check the presumption of curiosity; yet sufficiently luminous to afford the most satisfactory evidence, when once the transactions to which



they referred have taken place, that every circumstance was fore-ordained, foreseen, and foretold. He that will be the precursor of time in the regions of prophecy must travel surrounded by a perpetual mist, through which, indeed, a variety of objects are visible, but none of them distinctly seen; but he who is satisfied to follow closely the footsteps of this infallible guide, will have the pleasure of seeing the cloud gradually rolling away as he advances, and a world of order and harmony emerging from confusion and obscurity. There is a striking correspondence in point of imagery, general composition, spirit, and energy between prophecies of events long since decided, and predictions which relate to future and unseen transactions. There does not appear to be any reason why the last should not be as intelligible as the first—except that it wants the illumination of time afforded to the former, by which we are able to compare the prophecy with the object to which it was directed. Till this could be done, ancient predictions were as obscure as those of the latter dispensation remain still to us; and in every instance in which the remembrance of the event to which any prediction related has perished from the records of history, that prediction, so separated from its corresponding object, is to us as obscure and as unintelligible, as any prophecy relating to futurity. This remark has been abundantly established in the difficulty sometimes occurring in the preceding Lectures, to determine with any sort of satisfaction the meaning of predictions, the corresponding history of which has not reached the present times. Perhaps it does not require any other evidence, that we run too fast when we endeavour to anticipate the discoveries of time, than the distraction and variety of human hypotheses: the wide disagreement of men of equal talents and industry upon the same point of prophecy; and the total and repeated failure of some of those calculations upon which the greatest stress has been laid, and respecting which they have expressed the most decided conviction, amounting to every thing except absolute certainty. If this reasoning be just, the conclusion is irresistible, that our inquiries after prophecies unfulfilled should be modest and cautious: that we should beware of leaning too much to our own understandings—of pressing too far our private opinions—of attempting to give them the stamp and currency of inspired truth; of slackening the reins over imagination, naturally impetuous, and in so elevated and trackless a region almost entirely ungovernable: finding “no end, in wandering mazes lost.”—The question recurs—for what were these predictions then given? Doubtless to be received with thankfulness, to be examined with diligence and caution, and to afford us some measure of consolation

amidst the ills of the present, in prospect of the more glorious and animating future. For this reason we remarked,

Secondly, That the Scriptures furnish distinct *general* outlines of the events predicted, and yet to come, leaving them to be filled up by time. There are three or four most distinct and impressive predictions, which are as capable of evidence, so far as they have been already accomplished, as any prophecy relating to events which are past.

1. THE POWER AND DOMINION OF ANTICHRIST. A better definition of this term I cannot give than that which the apostle John has furnished. Who is a liar, but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is Antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son. And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God. And this is that spirit of Antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come, and even now already is it in the world." This general yet forcible description applying to every thing that opposes itself to the gospel of Christ, has met with some most extraordinary accomplishments in all its leading features, and will equally apply to PAPAL, MAHOMETAN, and INFIDEL Antichrist: for, said the same apostle, "there are *many* Antichrists."

The nature of that domination over conscience which the Roman PAPAL power should assume; the high pretensions of the head of her corrupt church; the lying wonders, the feigned miracles of her priesthood; and the utter destruction of so dreadful a system, were among the things distinctly foretold. "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped: so that he as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God"—"then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved."

Respecting MAHOMETAN Antichrist I enter not into the discussion, which would lead me too far from my purpose: it is included in St. John's general description; and it must perish with every thing that exalts itself against our God and his Christ.

Respecting INFIDEL Antichrist, it is sufficiently delineated in that "philosophy and vain deceit," against which we are explicitly

cautioned; and the times of which are marked by the prediction of a general apostacy, but too applicable to some of the features of this eventful period. Satisfied with merely sketching this general outline, I hasten to turn your eyes upon another most luminous point in prophecies yet unfulfilled, as to their whole extent,

2. THE UNIVERSAL DOMINION OF JESUS CHRIST. This undoubtedly constitutes the most brilliant and impressive portion of the prophetic writings, for the complete elucidation of which we are looking, with anxiety and with indescribable interest, to the present extraordinary and awful dispensations of providence. This point has already been slightly touched in the effects of the Redeemer's exaltation. It will be now necessary to enter a little more at large upon a subject so interesting. We turn with disgust from those scenes, which man in obedience to his passions, and in the pride of his power, has displayed, to those which the Divine Providence shall unfold, when the dominion of Jesus Christ shall be set up in the world; and when human nature shall obey other principles than those which we have seen called into action, while we have had reason to blush at the exhibition. We have, indeed, in this case also to contemplate a conqueror; but it is a hero of another order than him whom one half of the world worships, and the other execrates. This conqueror subdues the hearts, while others enslave the bodies of men. This hero is to vanquish by the word of his mouth, while they lay waste with fire and with the sword. The effects of their victories are weeping and lamentation, poverty and famine; and death rides on his pale horse by their side: but the consequence of *his* rising to claim the empire, whose right it is, will be the destruction of sin and the annihilation of misery.

It would be endless to place before you the vast variety of passages which relate to the growing empire of the Redeemer, and which predict its universal extent, its miraculous effects, its eternal duration. It is equally difficult, from so splendid and harmonious a list, to make a selection. There remains but one method, to confine the Lecture within due limits: and that is, to consider one passage as the representative of the whole. Isaiah describes the nature and the influence of the dominion of Christ. "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." There cannot be any doubt to whom the connexion of this passage should be applied, when the subject of it is called, "A rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch from his roots." The description of his qualifications will not suit any character less dignified than the Son of God; and that which was



gross flattery when applied by the Roman bard, in the most beautiful poem of all antiquity, to Marcellus, became accomplished in all the spirit of its sublime imagery in Jesus of Nazareth. The effects of his kingdom will be as gracious in the moral world, as is implied in the figures which prophecy borrows from the natural world. Already we receive a pledge of the influence of Christianity in its universal diffusion, in the effects produced by it daily, on a smaller scale, in its transformation of the character of individuals. As yet we see the operation of this glorious principle very confined: but it is animating to anticipate that which shall assuredly be, although our eyes shall not behold it; and it is consoling to think, that those very calamities, which we must be utterly insensible indeed not to deplore in their present influence, are among the events, which, under the regulation of the divine wisdom, shall produce that incalculable good, which we are taught, on the testimony of prophecy, to expect. The extension of the kingdom of Jesus Christ is called the diffusion of *knowledge*. Every man knows something of the Great Spirit who made and regulates the world; and with whom he is so intimately connected. There is a testimony to his being and perfections, both within, in the voice of conscience; and without, in the operations of nature. But knowledge may be more or less accurate, and more or less efficient. This is to be a knowledge at once accurate and experimental; a revelation shall be made universally of the nature, the laws and the government of God; the wanderings of the human mind are to be counteracted; and it is a knowledge not confined to the understanding, but which is also supposed to influence the heart.

We have been accustomed to consider this intelligence as an inestimable good, but as a good *confined*. Natural light is universal; moral light is at present partial and circumscribed. But the promises of this prediction represent the river of God, which now waters this country, and washes a few other spots of the habitable globe, breaking from its confinement, and overflowing its channel. It shall be no longer a stream visiting in its windings a few favoured fields; but it shall become a mighty ocean, spreading with resistless force over the face of all nations, and sweeping away in its progress all opposition. It must be allowed that this suggestion is benevolent. It is honourable to the enlarged principles of Christianity. It is also peculiar to them. When man framed to himself a conception of God, he considered him a partial Being, confining his regards to one spot of the earth, to one city, or at most to one empire. So, under the former dispensation, privileges of a religious nature were confined to one peculiar race of people: and it remained for Christianity to break down the wall of partition; to abolish these distinctions, and to com-

mand, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."

The *certainty* of this event is founded upon the clearness of the prediction, and the absoluteness of the promise. Without recurring to the divine fidelity and ability, it may be, perhaps, a more satisfactory argument here, to consider what he has already done, as a pledge for the future. Whatever of difficulty may be supposed to lie, and actually does lie, in the way of the diffusion of religious knowledge among barbarous and idolatrous nations, it must be admitted that the same difficulties presented themselves to the first missionaries in this great cause, respecting all those nations which are now partakers of this knowledge, and Great Britain among their number. The fact is simply this—human nature is the same in all ages, in all countries, under all circumstances. "The carnal mind" was always "enmity against God;" and men always loved darkness more than light, because their deeds were evil." Now, the same power which subdued these oppositions, in respect of some, can do it in respect of all; and as the gospel has triumphed already in part, we receive in this very circumstance, a most satisfactory pledge that the whole shall be accomplished. Neither is there any power that can lift itself against the will and the purpose of God; but those very agents, who act merely upon the impulse of their own depraved passions, or even designed *v* against the avowed plans of Deity, shall become, under his constraining, over-ruling hand, the instruments of promoting the work, of which they are altogether ignorant, or which they labour to destroy.

The *effects* which this kingdom shall produce are most beneficial. Men shall be *kindly affectioned* one towards another. In vain you make peace, and enter into treaties and alliances; while the root of bitterness, the spirit of strife, is within, tranquillity cannot be lasting. Religion will, as at present, promote the peace of society, by controlling and subduing the passions of individuals. It obtains possession of the heart; and its effects on the life inevitably and invariably follow. Society arises out of the combined forces, habits, customs, operations, and influence of individuals. So far as the individual is affected, to a certain extent society is affected; and thus religion will extend its influence over individuals, till whole nations shall fall under its righteous dominion. The flames which devour the earth are kindled and nourished by a fire within the human bosom: extinguish the one, and the other will of necessity go out. Kindness without, will be the consequence of *peace* within. The principles of religion, in their universal prevalence, cannot be less efficient than they are at present in a more confined sphere in the individual. What do they

make a man when they take possession of his heart? That they will make an empire, a continent, a world. Do they subdue his vile tempers? mortify his corrupt affections? restrain his brutal passions? Do they make the ferocious, gentle? the morose, kind? the hardened, tender? Do they change the lion into the lamb? and convert the venom of the serpent into the harmlessness of the dove? Is this their present influence? Be assured they will be no less effective and no less gracious on the grand and general scale marked out by Scripture prophecy. The same principles must always produce the same influence; and the same causes, the same effects, whether on a wider or more contracted range; the one will be proportionate to the other, and each uniformly true to each. Such, then, shall the world become. Its passions shall be subdued. Its instruments of cruelty shall be exchanged for the implements of husbandry; and contending nations learn war no more. "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid: and the calf and the young lion, and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed, their young ones shall lie down together: and the loin shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice den." Beautiful imagery! to express the renovation of the passions, and moral transformation.

*Universal holiness* is an effect of the diffusion of Christian knowledge, as well as universal peace. The whole earth becomes consecrated—God's habitation—his temple—his rest—his "holy mountain." We suffer from example. Example excites and stimulates those depraved propensities which are within us. Example hardens men in sin. Example deeply influences the individual; and soon gives a character to associated multitudes. *Now* evil examples abound to strengthen our depravity: but *then*, one individual will operate upon another; and one body of men upon another; and one nation upon another; to stimulate to works of faith and of love; and to an exhibition of holy practices, as the results of holy principles. Evil shall be thus destroyed; and the Prince of Peace give, at length, to this distracted world, rent with human contentions, in the tranquillity and in the purity of his empire, a foretaste of heaven, before he consumes it to destroy the curse, and makes all things new. "The kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our God and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever." Such are the *general* outlines of some most important prophecies, partly accomplished, partly fulfilling, but which remain to be completed; and this sublime outline, the hand of time is filling up.



Thirdly: It is our duty to keep our eye fixed upon prophecy, in tracing the dispensations of Providence, and to compare from time to time the one with the other; yet rather to apprehend that which is gradually unfolding, than to prejudge that which still lies concealed. The statement of this sentiment in itself almost entirely conveys what I design to propose as our most suitable line of conduct in the present singular period. The events which have long occupied the attention, and excited the apprehensions of mankind, have been, upon all human estimates, as melancholy in their effects as extraordinary in their causes. The wide and universal distractions which have rent kingdoms, and overturned thrones, have been painful to witness, and would be endless to detail. There are two points of view in which they are interesting. They effectually develope human principles; they clearly discover (in contradiction to all modern theories which deny the doctrine of human depravity) what is in man; and they demonstrate that our Lord was not deceived when he described all the calamities without, as proceeding from a fountain of iniquity within. We have seen these principles called into action upon a most extended scale; and they reflect no sort of honour upon human nature. These affecting transactions are also interesting, as they are most manifestly accomplishing what yet remains of prophecies unfulfilled. Papal Antichrist has not only been paralyzed by the shocks of these fearful convulsions, but is gradually expiring under their influence. "The whole head is sick, the whole heart is faint," and the disease is mortal. Eastern Antichrist shall assuredly follow. The seat of Mahomet must be shaken; and Turkey, the bosom that has cherished this enemy of the Lord Christ, ought to tremble. Her present system must eventually be overthrown; we presume not to say when, or by whom: the event only is certain. The only reason that can be assigned for the success of France is, that hitherto her arms have passed along the line of providence; whenever she has departed from this line, and turned them against Britain, she has been defeated; and when the great design shall eventually be accomplished, the instrument shall be laid aside. Infidel Antichrist shall then expire too—destroyed "by the Spirit of the Lord's mouth, and consumed with the brightness of his coming." "And then cometh the end. But as yet we see not all things put under him;" and our posture should be that of patient, resigned, teachable, expectation. I will not occupy your time by noticing the scandalous abuses and impositions of modern prophecy so called; when wretched, illiterate, designing persons, profess to be

inspired; and casting off all shame, wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. We may well spare our censure, when so dreadful a sentence is passed upon them in the passage read at the commencement of this Lecture: "If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book." Nor is the sentence against infidelity less dreadful. If any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and out of the things which are written in this book."

This, then, is the whole. And I now feel the moment of separation a very awful and impressive one. "Our fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live for ever?" Time has done for them what it is doing for us—they are removed from our sphere, and we are rising to that which they are promoted to occupy. Moses and Samuel, Noah, and Daniel, and Job, are recorded in the prophecies as having distinguished power to prevail with God. What is left them but a name! A name, indeed, that shall live till they re-appear with their Master—a memory that is blessed—an example that can never cease to operate—a eulogy more honourable than the proudest monuments of human greatness—pronounced by the mouth of God himself—recorded on the imperishable page of inspiration—and sanctioned by the voice of all succeeding ages. But they have gone to rest: they sleep in the dust: they no longer live, and walk, and converse, among men; they cease to be seen of us; and the earth has received them into her bosom; has covered them among the multitudes whom time has slain; and hides them from our eyes. "When a few years are come, then shall we also go the way, whence we shall not return." It *may* be but a few days: it *can* be but a few years. This night another religious arrangement closes; and its seasons of worship are numbered and finished. This night the estimates of your privileges and of your improvements are made and compared. This night the balance is struck; the final audit of this account granted; and the issue will be disclosed when time strikes *his* balance, and renders up *his* account. "Boast not thyself," O man, "of to-morrow." No new account may be opened with thee! The page which is full, and to which the signature of heaven is even now, while I speak, affixed—may be the last page of thy life! Hast thou seen the date written over the day of thy death? or hast thou entered into a league with the insatiate destroyer to spare thee, while he devours the world? Or hast thou received a covenant

from him, with whom are the issues of life, for the full date of man's threescore and ten years? If thou knowest not what shall be on the morrow; if thy times are in his hand; if futurity is concealed from thee; then, listen to His admonition at whose disposal thy life, and all future events are—wait—occupy—consider—prepare—"Go thou thy way till the end be: for thou also shalt rest, and stand in thy lot, at the end of the days!"

FINIS.









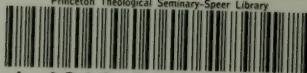








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